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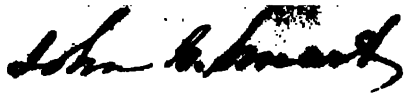

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ELEVEN SELECT

SERMONS,

OF THE LATE

Rev. JAMES SAURIN,

ON

VARIOUS IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

CONCORD:
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PREFACE.

THE Reverend *JAMES SAURIN*, the author of the enſuing diſcourſes, was born at Niſmes, a noted city of France, in 1677. His father was a lawyer, eminent for his learning and eloquence, of the proteſtant profeſſion, who, upon the revocation of the edict of Nantz, retired to Geneva, where he ended his days. James removed with him, and was educated under ſome of the moſt learned and pious profeſſors of the age.

Having completed his ſtudies, in 1700 he viſited England, where he reſided nearly five years, and was remarkably acceptable as a preacher among his fellow exiles in the city of London.

"His ſtyle," ſays the tranſlator of his ſermons, the Reverend *Robert Robinſon*, "was pure, unaffected, and eloquent, ſometimes plain, ſometimes flowery; but never improper, as it was always adapted to the audience for whoſe ſake he ſpoke."

In

In 1705, a chaplainſhip to ſome of the nobility at the Hague was offered him, which he accepted. Here he continued till his death. He was conſtantly attended by a very crowded and brilliant aſſembly. He was heard with the utmoſt attention, and his miniſterial labors were abundantly bleſſed by the great Head of the church.

He departed this life, for a better, on the 30th of December, 1730, at the age of 52, ſincerely and univerſally regretted by the people of his charge, and by all, who had the happineſs of an acquaintance with him.

Mr. Saurin's printed ſermons are compriſed in twelve volumes. From thoſe, which have been tranſlated, this ſelection has been carefully made by a gentleman of leiſure, judgment, and taſte.

To thoſe, who have not had opportunity for peruſing the ſermons of this celebrated divine, the following recommendation may not be unacceptable.

Approbation

Approbation of the Walloon Church at Dort, employed by the Synod of Utrecht, to examine the ſermons of Mr. Saurin.

"WE have found nothing in all theſe ſermons, contrary to the doctrine received among us. We have remarked every where, a manly eloquence; a cloſe reaſoning; an imagination, lively and proper, to eſtabliſh the Truth of our holy religion; and to explain, ſubſtantially and elegantly, the doctrines of morality. Accordingly, we believe they will effectually contribute to edify the Church, and to render more and more reſpectable the memory of this worthy ſervant of God; whoſe death, the examination of his works, hath given us a freſh occaſion to lament. We atteſt this to the venerable Synod at Utrecht. In the ſame ſentiments, we ſend the preſent atteſtation to our dear brother, Mr. Dumont, paſtor and profeſſor at Rotterdam, whom the late

Mr.

Mr. Saurin appointed, by his will, to take the charge of publiſhing ſuch of his works as were fit for the preſs.

Done at the Conſiſtory of the Walloon Church, at Dort, May 20th, 1731, and ſigned by order of all, by

H. G. Certon, *Paſtor.*
S. Comperat, *Paſtor.*
Adrian Bruets Jacobz, *Elder.*
John Backris, *Elder.*
John Van Breda, *Deacon.*
Simon Taay Van Campen, *Deac.*"

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

The Omnipreſence of God.

PSALM CXXXIX. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Page 17

SERMON II.

The Manner of praiſing God.

PSALM XXXIII. 1.

Page 47

SERMON III.

The Sovereignty of Jeſus Chriſt in the Church.

ROMANS XIV. 7, 8.

Page 69

SERMON IV.

The Equality of Mankind.

PROVERBS XXII. 2.

Page 95

SERMON V.

The Worth of the Soul.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

Page 119

SERMON VI.

The Birth of Jeſus Chriſt.

ISAIAH ix. 6, 7.

Page 144

SERMON VII.

The Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.

PSALM cxviii. 15, 16.

Page 170

SERMON VIII.

The Abſurdity of Libertiniſm and Infidelity.

PSALM xciv. 7, 8, 9, 10.

Page 197

SERMON IX.

The Harmony of Religion and Civil Polity.

PROVERBS xiv. 34.

Page 222

SERMON X.

Chriſtian Heroiſm.

PROVERBS xvi. 32.

Page 254

SERMON XI.

General Miſtakes.

ROMANS xii. 2.

Page 276

LIFE

OF

Rev. JAMES SAURIN.

MR. SAURIN, the father of our author, was an eminent proteſtant lawyer at Niſmes, who, after the repeal of the edict of Nantz, 1685, retired to Geneva. He was conſidered at Geneva as the oracle of the French language, the nature and beauty of which he thoroughly underſtood. He had four ſons, whom he trained up in learning, and who were all ſo remarkably eloquent, that eloquence was ſaid to be hereditary in the family. The Reverend Lewis Saurin, one of the ſons, was afterwards paſtor of a French church in London. Saurin, the father, died at Geneva. James, the author of the following ſermons, was born at Niſmes, in 1677, and went with his father into exile, to Geneva, where he profited very much in learning.

In the ſeventeenth year of his age, 1694, Saurin quitted his ſtudies to go into the army, and made a campaign as a cadet in lord Galloway's company. The next year, 1695, his captain gave him a pair of colours in his regiment, which then ſerved in Piedmont; but the year after, 1696, the duke of Savoy, under whom Saurin ſerved, having made his peace with France, Saurin quitted the profeſſion of arms, for which he was never deſigned, and returned to Geneva to ſtudy.

Geneva was, at that time, the reſidence of ſome of the beſt ſcholars in Europe, who were in the higheſt eſtimation in the republic of letters. Picket, Lewis Tronchin, and Philip Meſtrezat, were

profeſſors of divinity there; Alphonſo Turretin was profeſſor of ſacred hiſtory; and Chouet, who was afterwards taken from his profeſſorſhip, and admitted into the government of the republic, was profeſſor of natural philoſophy. The other departments were filled with men, equally eminent in their ſeveral profeſſions. Some of them were natives of Geneva, others were exiles from Italy and France, ſeveral were of noble families, and all of them were men of eminent piety. Under theſe great maſters, Saurin became a ſtudent, and particularly applied himſelf to divinity, as he now began to think of devoting himſelf to the miniſtry, 1696. To dedicate one's ſelf to the miniſtry in a wealthy, flouriſhing church, where rich benefices are every day becoming vacant, requires very little virtue, and ſometimes only a ſtrong propenſity to vice; but to chooſe to be a miniſter in ſuch a poor, baniſhed, perſecuted church as that of the French proteſtants, argues a noble contempt of the world, and a ſupreme love to God and to the ſouls of men. Theſe are the beſt teſtimonials, however, of a young miniſter, whoſe profeſſion is, not to enrich, but to *ſave himſelf, and them who hear him.* 1 Tim. iv. 16.

After Mr. Saurin had finiſhed his ſtudies, 1700, he viſited Holland and England. In the firſt he made a very ſhort ſtay; but in the laſt he ſtaid almoſt five years, and preached with great acceptance among his fellow exiles in London. Of his perſon an idea may be formed by the annexed copper-plate, which is ſaid to be a great likeneſs, and for which I am indebted to my ingenious friend Mr. Thomas Holloway. His dreſs was that of the French clergy, the gown and caſſock. His addreſs was perfectly genteel, a happy compound of the affable and the grave, at an equal diſtance from ruſticity and foppery. His voice *was ſtrong*, clear, and harmonious, and he never loſt

loſt the management of it. His ſtyle was pure, unaffected, and eloquent, ſometimes plain, and ſometimes flowery; but never improper, as it was always adapted to the audience, for whoſe ſake he ſpoke. An Italian acquaintance of mine, who often heard him at the Hague, tells me, that in the introductions of his ſermons he uſed to deliver himſelf in a tone modeſt and low; in the body of the ſermon, which was adapted to the underſtanding, he was plain, clear, and argumentative, pauſing at the cloſe of each period, that he might diſcover, by the countenances and motions of his hearers, whether they were convinced by his reaſoning; in his addreſſes to the wicked, (and it is a folly to preach as if there were none in our aſſemblies, Mr. Saurin knew mankind too well) he was often ſonorous, but oftener a weeping ſuppliant at their feet. In the one he ſuſtained the authoritative dignity of his office, in the other he expreſſed his Maſter's and his own benevolence to bad men, *praying them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.* 2 Cor. v. 20. In general, adds my friend, his preaching reſembled a plentiful ſhower of dew, ſoftly and imperceptibly inſinuating itſelf into the minds of his numerous hearers, as the dew into the pores of plants, till the whole church was diſſolved, and all in tears under his ſermons. His doctrine was that of the French proteſtants, which, at that time, was moderate calviniſm. He approved of the diſcipline of his own churches, which was preſbyterian. He was an admirable ſcholar, and, which were his higheſt encomiums, he had an unconquerable averſion to ſin, a ſupreme love to God and to the ſouls of men, and a holy unblemiſhed life. Certainly he had ſome faults; but, as I have never heard of any, I can publiſh none.

During his ſtay in England, he married a Miſs Catherine Boyton, in 1703, by whom he had a ſon, named Philip, who ſurvived him; but whether

er he had any more children I know not. Two years after his marriage he returned to Holland, in 1705, where he had a mind to ſettle; but, the paſtoral offices being all full, and meeting with no proſpect of a ſettlement, though his preaching was received with univerſal applauſe, he was preparing to return to England, when a chaplainſhip to ſome of the nobility at the Hague, with a ſtipend, was offered to him. This ſituation exactly ſuited his wiſhes, and he accepted the place.

The Hague, it is ſaid, is the fineſt village in Europe. It is the reſidence of the States General, of ambaſſadors and envoys from other courts, of a great number of nobility and gentry, and of a multitude of French refugees. The princes of Orange have a ſpacious palace here, and the chapel of the palace was given to the refugees for a place of public worſhip; and, it being too ſmall to contain them, it was enlarged by above a half. This French church called him to be one of their paſtors. He accepted the call, and continued in his office till his death. He was conſtantly attended by a very crowded and brilliant audience, was heard with the utmoſt attention and pleaſure, and, what few miniſters can ſay, the effects of his miniſterial labours were ſeen in the holy lives of great numbers of his people.

When the princeſs of Wales, afterward Queen Caroline, paſſed through Holland in her way to England, Mr. Saurin had the honour of paying his reſpects to that illuſtrious lady. Her royal highneſs was pleaſed to ſingle him out from the reſt of the clergy, who were preſent, and to ſay to him, "Do not imagine that, being dazzled with the glory which this revolution ſeems to promiſe me, I have loſt ſight of that God from whom it proceeds. He hath been pleaſed to diſtinguiſh it with ſo many extraordinary marks, that

that I cannot miſtake his divine hand; and, as I conſider this long train of favours as immediately coming from him, to him alone I conſecrate them." It is not aſtoniſhing, that Saurin ſpeaks of condeſcenſion with rapture. They are the kind and chriſtian actions of the governors of a free people, and not the haughty airs of a French tyrant, inſulting his ſlaves, that attach and inflame the hearts of mankind. The hiſtory of this illuſtrious chriſtian queen is not written in blood; and therefore it is always read with tears of grateful joy.

Her royal highneſs was ſo well ſatisfied of Mr. Saurin's merit, that ſoon after her arrival in England ſhe ordered Dr. Boulter, who was preceptor to prince Frederick, the father of his preſent majeſty, to write to Saurin, to draw up a treatiſe on the education of princes. Saurin immediately obeyed the order, and prefixed a dedication to the young princes. The book was never printed; but as it obtained the approbation of the princeſs of Wales, who was an incomparable judge, we may conclude that it was excellent in its kind. This was followed by a handſome preſent from the princeſs to the author.

His moſt conſiderable work was entitled, *Diſcourſes, hiſtorical, critical, and moral, on the moſt memorable events of the old and new teſtament.* This work was undertaken by the deſire of a Dutch merchant, who expended an immenſe ſum in the engraving of a multitude of copper-plates, which adorn the work. It conſiſts of ſix folio volumes. Mr. Saurin died before the third was finiſhed; but Mr. Roques finiſhed the third, and added a fourth on the old teſtament; and Mr. de Beauſobre ſubjoined two on the new teſtament. The whole is replete with very extenſive learning, and well worth the careful peruſal of ſtudents in divinity. The firſt of theſe was

tranſlated into Engliſh by Chamberlayne, ſoon after its firſt publication in French.

Our author's *diſſertation on the expedience of ſometimes diſguiſing the truth*, raiſed a furious clamour againſt him. He does not decide the queſtion; but he ſeems to take the affirmative. This produced a paper war, and his antagoniſts unjuſtly cenſured his morals. The mildneſs of his diſpoſition rendered him a deſirable opponent, for though he was ſure to conquer, yet he ſubdued his adverſary ſo handſomely, that the captive was the better for his defeat. But others did not controvert with ſo much temper. Some wrote againſt him, others for him. At length the ſynod decided the diſpute in his favour.

He publiſhed a ſmall, but valuable piece, *on the ſtate of chriſtianity in France*. It treats of many important points of religion, in controverſy between catholics and proteſtants. There is alſo a ſmall *catechiſm* of his publiſhing, which I think worth the attention of ſuch as educate children in the firſt principles of religion.

There are twelve volumes of his ſermons. Some are dedicated to his majeſty George II. and the king was pleaſed to allow him a handſome penſion. Some to her majeſty Queen Caroline, while ſhe was princeſs of Wales. One to count Waſſanaer, a Dutch nobleman. Two were dedicated to her majeſty, after his deceaſe, by his ſon. Profeſſor Dumont, and Mr. Huſſon, to whom Mr. Saurin left his manuſcripts, publiſhed the reſt, and one volume is dedicated to the counteſs Dowager of Albemarle. The Engliſh ſeem therefore to have a right to the labours of this great man.

Mr. Saurin died at the Hague, on Dec. 30th, 1730, aged 53, moſt ſincerely regretted by all his acquaintances, as well as by his church, who loſt in him a truly primitive chriſtian miniſter,

who

who ſpent his life in watching over his flock, as one who knew he muſt give an account.

In regard to this tranſlation, it was firſt undertaken by the deſire of a ſmall circle of private friends, for our mutual edification. If I have ſuffered my private opinion to be prevailed over by others to print this tranſlation, it is not becauſe I think myſelf able to give language to Saurin; but becauſe I humbly hope that the ſentiments of the author may be conveyed to the reader by it. His ſentiments, I think, are, in general, thoſe of the holy ſcripture, and his manner of treating them well adapted to impreſs them on the heart. I have endeavoured not to diſguiſe his meaning, though I have not been able to adopt his ſtyle; for which defect, though I print them by private ſubſcription, for the uſe of my friends, on whoſe candour I depend, yet I do not offer to publiſh them to the world for the language of Mr. Saurin. I ſhould have been glad to have pleaſed every ſubſcriber, by inſerting thoſe ſermons, which were moſt agreeable to him, had I known which they were; but as this was impoſſible, I have followed my own judgment, or perhaps expoſed my want of it. The firſt volume aims to ſecure the doctrine of a *God*, againſt the attacks of atheiſts. In the ſecond, we mean to plead for the holy *ſcriptures* againſt deiſts. In the third, we intend to take thoſe ſermons, which treat of the *doctrines of chriſtianity*, as we humbly conceive that the new teſtament is ſomething more than a ſyſtem of moral philoſophy. And the laſt volume we dedicate to *moral* ſubjects, becauſe we think chriſtianity a holy religion, productive of moral obedience in all its true diſciples. To this ſecond edition a *fifth* volume is added on miſcellaneous ſubjects. May the God of all grace bleſs the reading of them to the weakening of the dominion of ſin, and to the advancement of the kingdom of our bleſſed Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt!

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

PSALM CXXXIX. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art *there: If I make my bed in hell, behold thou* art there. If *I take the wings of the morning,* and *dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me: even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light* are *both alike* to thee.

COULD I have one wiſh, to anſwer my propoſed end of preaching to-day with efficacy, chriſtians, it ſhould be to ſhew you God in this aſſembly. Moſes had ſuch an advantage, no man therefore ever ſpoke with greater ſucceſs. He gave the law to the people, in God the legiſlator's preſence. He could ſay, This law which I give you, proceeds from God: here is his throne, there is his lightning, yonder is his thunder. Accordingly, never were a people more ſtruck with a legiſlator's voice. Moſes had hardly begun to ſpeak, but, at leaſt for that moment, all hearts were united, and all Sinai echoed with one voice, crying, "All that thou haſt ſpoken we will do." Exod. xix. 8.

But

But in vain are our ſermons drawn from the ſacred ſources: in vain do we ſay to you, *Thus ſaith the Lord:* you ſee only a man; you hear only a mortal voice in this pulpit; God hath put his *treaſure into earthen veſſels*, 2 Cor. iv. 7. and our auditors, eſtimating the treaſure by the meanneſs of the veſſel, inſtead of ſupporting the meanneſs of the veſſel for the ſake of the treaſure, hear us without reſpect, and, generally, derive no advantage from the miniſtry.

But were God preſent in this aſſembly, could we ſhew you the Deity amongſt you, authorizing our voice by his approbation and preſence, and examining with what diſpoſitions you hear his word, which of you, which of you, my brethren, could reſiſt ſo eminent and ſo noble a motive?

Chriſtians, this idea is not deſtitute of reality: God is every where; he is in this church. Vails of fleſh and blood prevent your ſight of him; theſe muſt fall, and you muſt open the eyes of your ſpirits, if you would ſee a *God*, who *is a ſpirit*, John iv. 24. Hear our prophet; hear his magnificent deſcription of the immenſity and omnipreſence of God, "Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit? or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I aſcend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea; even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me. If I ſay, Surely the darkneſs ſhall cover me; even the night ſhall be light about me. Yea the darkneſs hideth not from thee; but the night ſhineth as the day: the darkneſs and the light are both alike to thee."

In a text leſs abundant in riches, we might make ſome remarks on the terms *ſpirit* and *preſence*; but we will content ourſelves at preſent with indicating what ideas we affix to them, by obſerving, that by the *ſpirit* and *preſence* of God,

we

we underſtand God himſelf. I know, ſome divines diſcover great myſteries in theſe terms, and tell us that there are ſome paſſages in ſcripture where the word *preſence* means the ſecond perſon in the moſt holy Trinity, and where the term *ſpirit* is certainly to be underſtood of the third. But as there are ſome paſſages where theſe terms have not this ſignification, it is beyond all doubt that this, which we are explaining, is preciſely of the latter kind. However, if any diſpute our comment, we ſhall leave them to diſpute it; for it would be unjuſt to conſume that time, which is dedicated to the edification of a whole congregation, in refuting a particular opinion. The other expreſſions in our text, *heaven, hell; the wings of the morning*, a figurative expreſſion, denoting the rapidity of the light in communicating itſelf from one end of the world to the other; theſe expreſſions, I ſay, need no comment. The *preſence* of God, the *ſpirit* of God, ſignify then the divine eſſence; and this aſſemblage of ideas, *whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit? whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence?* means, that God is immenſe, and that he is preſent in every place.

But wherein conſiſts this immenſity and omnipreſence? If ever a queſtion required developing, this certainly does; not only becauſe it preſents to the mind an abſtract ſubject, which does not fall under the obſervation of the ſenſes, but becauſe many who have treated this matter, (pardon an opinion which does not proceed from a deſire of oppoſing any individual, but only from a love to the truth) many who have handled the ſubject, have contributed more to perplex, than to explain it. We may obſerve, in general, that, unleſs we be wholly unacquainted with the hiſtory of the ſciences, it is impoſſible not to acknowledge, that all queſtions about the nature of ſpirits, all that are any way related to metaphyſics,

ics, were very little underſtood before the time of that celebrated philoſopher, whom God ſeems to have beſtowed on the world to purify reaſon, as he had ſome time before raiſed up others to purify religion.*

What heaps of crude and indigeſted notions do we find, among the ſchoolmen, of the immenſity of God? One ſaid, God was a point, indiviſible indeed, but a point, however, that had the peculiar property of occupying every part of the univerſe. Another, that God was the place of all beings, the immenſe extent in which his power had placed them. Another, that his eſſence was *really* in heaven, but yet, *repletively*, as they expreſs it, in every part of the univerſe. In ſhort, this truth hath been obſcured by the groſſeſt ignorance. Whatever averſion we have to the deciſive tone, we will venture to affirm, that people, who talked in this manner of God, had no ideas themſelves of what they advanced.

Do not be afraid of our conducting you into theſe wild mazes; do not imagine that we will buſy ourſelves in expoſing all theſe notions, for the ſake of labouring to refute them. We will content ourſelves with giving you ſome light into the omnipreſence of God:

I. By removing thoſe falſe ideas, which, at firſt, ſeem to preſent themſelves to the imagination;

II. By aſſigning the true.

I. Let us remove the falſe ideas, which, at firſt, preſent themſelves to the imagination; as if, when we ſay that God is preſent in any place, we mean that he is actually contained therein; as if, when we ſay that God is in every place, we mean to aſſign to him a real and proper extenſion.

* The philoſopher intended by Mr. S. I ſuppoſe, is his countryman Deſcartes, born in 1596. Vie de Deſc. *par Baillet.*

ſion. Neither of theſe is deſigned; and to remove theſe ideas, my brethren, two reflections are ſufficient.

God is a ſpirit. A ſpirit cannot be in a place, at leaſt in the manner in which we conceive of place.

1. God is a ſpirit. What relation can you find between wiſdom, power, mercy, and all the other attributes, which enter into your notion of the divinity, and the nature of bodies? Pulverize matter, give it all the different forms of which it is ſuſceptible, elevate it to its higheſt degree of attainment, make it vaſt and immenſe, moderate or ſmall, luminous or obſcure, opaque or tranſparent: there will never reſult any thing but figures, and never will you be able, by all theſe combinations or diviſions, to produce one ſingle ſentiment, one ſingle thought, like that of the meaneſt and moſt contracted of all mankind. If matter then cannot be the ſubject of one ſingle operation of the ſoul of a mechanic, how ſhall it be the ſubject of thoſe attributes which make the eſſence of God himſelf?

But perhaps God, who is ſpiritual in one part of his eſſence, may be corporeal in another part, like man, who, although he hath a ſpiritual ſoul, is yet united to a portion of matter. No: for, however admirable in man that union of ſpiritual and ſenſible may be, and thoſe laws which unite his ſoul to his body, nothing more fully marks his weakneſs and dependence, and conſequently nothing can leſs agree with the divine eſſence. Is it not a mark of the dependence of an immortal and intelligent ſoul, to be enveloped in a little fleſh and blood, which, according to their different motions, determine his joy or ſorrow, his happineſs or miſery? Is it not a mark of the weakneſs of our ſpirits, to have the power of acting only on that little matter to which we are united, and to have no power over more? Who

can imagine that God hath ſuch limits? He hath no body: he is united to none; yet he is united to all. That celebrated philoſopher, ſhall I call him? or atheiſt,* who ſaid that the aſſemblage of all exiſtence conſtituted the divine eſſence, who would have us conſider all corporeal beings as the body of the divinity, publiſhed a great extravagance, if he meant that the divine eſſence conſiſted of this aſſemblage. But there is a very juſt ſenſe, in which it may be ſaid that the whole univerſe is the body of the Deity. In effect, as I call this portion of matter my body, which I move, act, and direct as I pleaſe, ſo God actuates by his will every part of the univerſe: he obſcures the ſun, he calms the winds, he commands the ſea. But this very notion excludes all corporiety from God, and proves that God is a ſpirit. If God ſometimes repreſents himſelf with feet, with hands, with eyes, he means in theſe portraits, rather to give us emblems of his attributes, than images (properly ſpeaking) of any parts which he poſſeſſeth. Therefore, when he attributes theſe to himſelf, he gives them ſo vaſt an extent, that we eaſily perceive they are not to be groſsly underſtood. Hath he hands? they are hands *which weigh the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance*, which *meaſure the waters in the hollow of his hand, and mete out the heavens with a ſpan*, Iſa. lx. 12. Hath he eyes? they are eyes that penetrate the moſt unmeaſurable diſtances. Hath he feet? they are feet which reach from heaven to earth, for the *heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footſtool*, ch. lxvi. 1. Hath he a voice? it is as *the ſound of many waters, breaking the cedars of Lebanon, making mount Sirion*

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* Mr. S. means, I ſhould ſuppoſe, Spinoza; whoſe ſyſtem of atheiſm, ſays a ſenſible writer, is more groſs, and therefore leſs dangerous, than others; his poiſon *carrying its antidote* with it.

skip like an unicorn, and the hinds to calve, Pſal. xxix. 3, 5, 6, 9.

This reminds me of a beautiful paſſage in Plato. He ſays that the gods, particularly the chief god, the ineffable beauty, as he calls him, cannot be conceived of but by the underſtanding only, and by quitting ſenſible objects; that, in order to contemplate the divinity, terreſtrial ideas muſt be ſurmounted; that the eyes cannot ſee him; that the ears cannot hear him. A thought which Julian the apoſtate, a great admirer of that philoſopher, ſo nobly expreſſes in his ſatire on the Cæſars. Thus every thing ſerves to eſtabliſh our firſt principle, that God is a ſpirit.

2. But to prove that God is a ſpirit, and to prove that he occupies no place, at leaſt as our imagination conceives, is, in our opinion, to eſtabliſh the ſame theſis.

I know how difficult it is to make this conſequence intelligible and clear, not only to thoſe who have never been accuſtomed to meditation, and who are therefore more excuſable for having confuſed ideas; but even to ſuch as, having cultivated the ſciences, are moſt intent on refining their ideas. I freely acknowledge, that after we have uſed our utmoſt efforts to riſe above ſenſe and matter, it will be extremely difficult to conceive the exiſtence of a ſpirit, without conceiving it in a certain place. Yet, I think, whatever difficulty there may be in the ſyſtem of thoſe who maintain that an immaterial being cannot be in a place, properly ſo called, there are greater difficulties ſtill in the oppoſite opinion: for, what is immaterial hath no parts; what hath no parts hath no form; what hath no form hath no extenſion; what hath no extenſion can have no ſituation in place, properly ſo called. For what is it to be in place? is it not to fill ſpace? is it not to be adjuſted with ſurrounding bodies?

bodies? how adjuſt with ſurrounding bodies without parts? how conſiſt of parts without being corporeal? But if you aſcribe a real and proper extenſion to a ſpirit, every thought of that ſpirit would be a ſeparate portion of that extenſion, as every part of the body is a ſeparate portion of the whole body; every operation of ſpirit would be a modification of that extenſion, as every operation of body is a modification of body; and, were this the caſe, there would be no abſurdity in ſaying that a thought is round, or ſquare, or cubic, which is nothing leſs than the confounding of ſpirit with matter. Thus the idea, which our imagination forms of the omnipreſence of God, when it repreſents the eſſence of the Supreme Being filling infinite ſpaces, as we are lodged in our houſes, is a falſe idea that ought to be carefully avoided.

II. What notions then muſt we form of the immenſity of God? In what ſenſe do we conceive that the infinite Spirit is every where preſent? My brethren, the bounds of our knowledge are ſo ſtrait, our ſphere is ſo contracted, we have ſuch imperfect ideas of ſpirits, even of our own ſpirits, and, for a much ſtronger reaſon, of the Father of ſpirits, that no genius in the world, however exalted you may ſuppoſe him, after his greateſt efforts of meditation, can ſay to you, Thus far extend the attributes of God; behold a complete idea of his immenſity and omnipreſence. Yet, by the help of ſound reaſon, above all by the aid of revelation, we may give you, if not complete, at leaſt diſtinct ideas of the ſubject; it is poſſible, if not to indicate all the ſenſes in which God is immenſe, at leaſt to point out ſome: it is poſſible, if not to ſhew you all the truth, at leaſt to diſcover it in part.

Let us not conceive the omnipreſence of God as a particular attribute (if I may venture to ſay ſo) of the Deity, as goodneſs or wiſdom, but as

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the extent or infinity of many others. The omnipreſence of God is that univerſal property by which he communicates himſelf to all, diffuſes himſelf through all, is the great director of all, or, to confine ourſelves to more diſtinct ideas ſtill, the infinite ſpirit is preſent in every place.

1. By a boundleſs knowledge.
2. By a general influence.
3. By an univerſal direction.

God is every where, becauſe he *ſeeth* all, becauſe he *influenceth* all, becauſe he *directeth* all. This we muſt prove and eſtabliſh. But if you would judge rightly of what you have heard, and of what you may ſtill hear, you muſt remember that this ſubject hath no relation to your pleaſures, nor to your policy, nor to any of thoſe objects which occupy and fill your whole ſouls; and conſequently, that if you would follow us, you muſt ſtretch your meditation, and go, as it were, out of yourſelves.

1. The firſt idea of God's omnipreſence is his *omniſcience*. God is every where preſent, becauſe he *ſeeth* all. This the prophet had principally in view. "O Lord, thou haſt ſearched me, and known me. Thou knoweſt my down-ſitting and mine up-riſing, thou underſtandeſt my thoughts afar off. Thou compaſſeſt my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knoweſt it altogether. Thou haſt beſet me behind and before. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it," ver. 1, 2, 3, &c. Then follow the words of our text: "Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit," and ſo on.

Let us not then conſider the Deity, after the example of the ſchoolmen, as a point fixed in the univerſality of beings. Let us conſider the univerſality of beings as a point, and the Deity as an immenſe eye, which ſees all that paſſes in

ſult from intelligence, freedom of will, and all the faculties which make the eſſence of ſpirits; and, before he had formed thoſe ſpiritual beings which compoſe the intelligent world, he knew what all their ideas, all their projects, all their deliberations, would for ever be.

I am aware, that a particular conſequence, which follows this doctrine, hath made ſome divines exclaim againſt this theſis, and, under the ſpecious pretence of exculpating the Deity from the entrance of ſin into this world, they have affirmed that God could not foreſee the determinations of a free agent; for, ſay they, had he foreſeen the abuſe which man would have made of his liberty, by reſolving to ſin, his love to holineſs would have engaged him to prevent it. But to reaſon in this manner is, in attempting to ſolve a difficulty, to leave that difficulty in all its force.

All they ſay on this article, proceeds from this principle, that a God infinitely juſt, and infinitely powerful, ought to diſplay (if it be allowable to ſay ſo) all the infinity of his attributes to prevent ſin. But this principle is notoriouſly falſe. Witneſs that very permiſſion of ſin which is objected to us. You will not acknowledge that God foreſaw man's fall into ſin: acknowledge, at leaſt, that he foreſaw the poſſibility of man's falling, and that, in forming a creature free, he knew that ſuch a creature might chuſe virtue or vice; acknowledge, at leaſt, that God could have created man with ſo much knowledge, and could have afforded him ſo many ſuccours; he could have preſented ſuch powerful motives to holineſs inceſſantly, and diſcovered to him the dreadful conſequences of his rebellion ſo effectually; he could have united obedience to his commands with ſo many delights, and the moſt diſtant thought of diſobedience with ſo many diſguſts; he could have baniſhed from man every temptation

tion to ſin, ſo that he would never have been a ſinner. Yet God created man in another manner; conſequently it is not true, even in your ſyſtem, that God hath exerted all the power he could to prevent ſin's entrance into the world. Conſequently it is falſe, that a Being, who perfectly loves holineſs, ought to diſplay the whole extent of his attributes to prevent ſin, and to eſtabliſh virtue. Conſequently, the principle on which you ground your denial of God's comprehenſion of all the diſpoſitions of ſpirits, is an unwarrantable principle, and to attempt to ſolve the difficulty in this manner, is to leave it in all its force.

But if you conſult revelation, you will find that God claims an univerſal knowledge of ſpirits. He ſays, he *ſearcheth and knoweth them*, Jer. xvii. 10. Rev. ii. 23. He foreſaw, he foretold, the afflictions which Abraham's poſterity would endure in Canaan, Gen. xv. 13. the hardening of Pharaoh, the infidelity of the Jews, the faith of the Gentiles, the crucifixion of the Meſſiah, Exod. iii. 19, the coming of the *prince* or leader, that is of Veſpaſian, or Titus, who would *deſtroy the city and the ſanctuary*, Dan. ix. 25, 26. And conſequently, we have a right to affirm, that God knows all the thoughts of the mind, and all the ſentiments of the heart, as well as that he knows all the motions of matter.

Perhaps you wiſh, my brethren, that our ſpeculations were carried further; perhaps you would have us diſentangle the ſubject from all its difficulties; perhaps you wiſh we could make you comprehend, in a clear and diſtinct manner, how it is poſſible that ſuch immenſe objects can be always preſent to the Supreme Intelligence; but what mortal tongue can expreſs ſuch ſublime truths, or what capacity is able to conceive them! On this article, we are obliged with our prophet to exclaim, *ſuch knowledge* is too wonderful

derful for me; it is high; I cannot attain unto it! ver. 6. In general, we conceive that the ſphere of divine knowledge is not contracted by any of the limits that confine the ſpirits of mankind.

The human ſpirit is united to a portion of matter. Man can perform no operation without the agitation of his brain, without the motion of his animal ſpirits, without the help of his ſenſes. But the brain wearies, the ſpirits evaporate, the ſenſes are blunted, and the minuteſt alteration of body clogs the moſt penetrating and active genius. But God, as we have repreſented him, thinks, underſtands, meditates, without brain, without ſpirits, without any need of ſenſes; not participating their nature, he never participates their alteration, and thus hath intelligence immediately from the treaſure of intelligence itſelf.

The ſpirit of man owes its exiſtence to a ſuperior ſpirit, to a foreign cauſe, to a Being who gives him only ſuch ideas as he thinks proper, and who hath been pleaſed to conceal numberleſs myſteries from him. But God, God not only does not owe his exiſtence to a foreign cauſe, but all that exiſt derive their exiſtence from him. His ideas were the models of all beings, and he hath only to contemplate himſelf perfectly to know them.

The ſpirit of man is naturally a finite ſpirit; he can conſider only one circle of objects at once, many ideas confound him; if he would ſee too much, he ſees nothing; he muſt ſucceſſively contemplate what he cannot contemplate in one moment. But God is an infinite ſpirit; with one ſingle look he beholdeth the whole univerſe. This is the firſt idea of the omnipreſence of God. As I am accounted preſent in this auditory, becauſe I ſee the objects that are here, becauſe I am witneſs of all that paſſes here; ſo God is every where, becauſe he ſees all, becauſe veils the

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moſt impenetrable, darkneſs the moſt thick, diſtances the moſt immenſe, can conceal nothing from his knowledge. Soar to the utmoſt heights, fly into the remoteſt climates, wrap thyſelf in the blackeſt darkneſs, every where, every where, thou wilt be under his eye. "Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit? or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence?"

But, 2. The knowledge of God is not a bare knowledge, his preſence is not an idle preſence; it is an active knowledge, it is a preſence accompanied with action and motion. We ſaid juſt now, that God was every where, becauſe he *influenced* all, as far as influence could agree with his perfections. Remark this reſtriction, for as we are diſcuſſing a ſubject the moſt fertile in controverſy, and as, in a diſcourſe of an hour, it is impoſſible to anſwer all objections, which may be all anſwered elſewhere, we would give a general preſervative againſt every miſtake. We mean an influence which agrees with the divine perfections; and if from any of our general propoſitions, you infer any conſequences injurious to thoſe perfections, you may conclude, from that very reaſon, that you have ſtretched them beyond their due bounds. We repeat it then, God influenceth all things, as far as ſuch influence agrees with his perfections.

When new beings appear, he is there. He influences their production. He gives to all *life, motion, and being*, Acts xvii. 28. "Thou, even thou art Lord alone, thou haſt made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their hoſt, the earth and all things that are therein, the ſeas and all that is therein, and thou preſerveſt them all, and the hoſt of heaven worſhippeth thee," Neh. ix. 6. "O Lord, I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth right well. My ſubſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made

made in ſecret, and curiouſly wrought in the loweſt parts of the earth. Thine eyes did ſee my ſubſtance yet being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were faſhioned, when as yet there was none of them," Pſal. cxxxix. 14, 15, 16. "Thine hands have made me, and faſhioned me together round about. Thou haſt clothed me with ſkin and fleſh, and haſt fenced me with bones and ſinews."

When beings are preſerved, he is there. He influences their preſervation. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulneſs reacheth unto the clouds. Thou preſerveſt man and beaſt," Pſal. xxxvi. 5, 6. "When thou openeſt thy hand they are filled with good: thou hideſt thy face they are troubled, thou takeſt away their breath they die, and return to their duſt. Thou ſendeſt forth thy ſpirit they are created, and thou reneweſt the face of the earth," Pſal. civ. 28, 29, 30.

When the world is diſordered, he is there. He influenceth wars, peſtilences, famines, and all the viciſſitudes which diſorder the world. If nature refuſe her productions, it is becauſe he hath *made the heaven as iron, and the earth as brass*, Lev. xxvi. 19. If peace ſucceed war, he makes both. If *lions ſlay the inhabitants of Samaria*, it is *the Lord who ſends them*, 2 Kings xvii. 25. When tempeſtuous winds break down thoſe immenſe banks which your induſtry has oppoſed to them, when a devouring fire reduceth your houſes to aſhes, it is he who *makes the winds his meſſengers, and his miniſters flames of fire*, Pſal. civ. 4.

When every thing ſucceeds according to our wiſhes, he is there. He influenceth proſperity. "Except the Lord build the houſe, they labour in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is

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vain for you to riſe up early, to ſit up late, to eat the bread of ſorrows. It is God who giveth his beloved ſleep," Pſal. cxxvii. 1, 2.

When our underſtanding is informed, he is there. He influenceth our knowledge. For *in his light we ſee light*, Pſal. xxxvi. 9. "He lighteth every man that cometh into the world," John i. 9.

When our heart diſpoſeth us to our duties, he is there. He influenceth our virtues. It is he who *worketh in us, both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure*, Phil. ii. 13. It is he who *giveth us not only to believe but to ſuffer for his ſake*, chap. i. 29. It is he who *giveth to all that ask him liberally and upbraideth not*, James i. 5.

When the groſſeſt errors cover us, he is there. He influenceth errors. It is God who *ſends ſtrong delusions that men ſhould believe a lie*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 11. "Go make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes, leſt they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears," Iſa. vi. 10.

When we violate the laws of righteouſneſs, he is there. He influenceth ſins, even the greateſt ſins. Witneſs Pharaoh, whoſe *heart he hardened*, Exod. iv. 21. Witneſs Shimei, whom *the Lord bade to curſe David*, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. Witneſs what Iſaiah ſaid, *the Lord hath mingled a perverſe ſpirit in the midſt of Egypt*, chap. xix. 14.

When magiſtrates, our earthly gods, conſult and deliberate, he is there. He influenceth policy. It is he who *hath the hearts of kings in his hand, and turneth them as the rivers of water*, Prov. xxi. 1. It is he who *giveth kings in his anger, and taketh them away in his wrath*, Hoſea xiii. 11. It is he who maketh *the Aſſyrian the rod of his anger*, Iſa. x. 5. "Herod and Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Iſrael,

did what his hand and his counsel determined before to be done," Acts iv. 27, 28.

When we live, when we die, he is there. He influenceth life and death. "Man's days are determined, the number of his months are with him, he has appointed his bounds that he cannot pass," Job xiv. 5. "To God the Lord belongs the issues from death," Psal. lxviii. 20. "He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up," 1 Sam. ii. 6.

He influences the least events, as well as the most considerable. Not being fatigued with the care of great things, he can occupy himself about the smallest without prejudice to the rest; *number the hairs of our heads*, and not let even *a sparrow fall without his will*, Matt. x. 29, 30.

But, 3. When God communicates himself to all, when he thus acts on all, when he diffuseth himself thus through the whole, he connects all with his own designs, and makes all serve his own counsels: and this is our third idea of his immensity and omnipresence. God is present with all, because he *directs* all.

Doth he call the creatures into existence? it is to manifest his perfections. It is to have subjects on whom he may shower his favours; it is, as it were, to go out of himself, and to form through the whole universe a concert resounding the Creator's existence and glory. "For the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and godhead, are understood by the things that are made," Rom. i. 20. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard," Psal. xix. 1, 2, 3.

Doth he preserve his creatures? it is to answer his own designs, the depth of which no finite mind can fathom; but designs which we shall

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one day know, and admire his wiſdom when we know them, as we adore it now, though we know them not.

Doth he ſend plagues, wars, famines? it is to make thoſe feel his juſtice who have abuſed his goodneſs; it is to avenge the violation of his law, the contempt of his goſpel, the forgetting and forſaking of the intereſt of his church.

Doth he afford us proſperity? it is to *draw us with the bands of love*, Hoſea xi. 4. it is to reveal himſelf to us by that love which is his eſſence; it is to engage us to imitate him, who *never leaves himself without witness in doing good*, Acts xiv. 17.

Doth he impart knowledge to us? it is to diſcover the ſnares that ſurround us, the miſeries that threaten us, the origin from which we ſprang, the courſe of life we ſhould follow, and the end at which we ſhould aim.

Doth he communicate virtues? it is to animate us in our race; it is to convince us that there is a mighty arm to raiſe us from the abyſs into which our natural corruption hath plunged us; it is that we may *work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that God worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Doth he ſend us error? it is to make us reſpect that truth which we have reſiſted.

Doth he abandon us to our vices? it is to puniſh us for ſome other vices which we have committed voluntarily and freely; ſo that, if we could comprehend it, his love for holineſs never appears more clearly, than when he abandons men to vice in this manner.

Doth he raiſe up kings? it is always to oblige them to adminiſter juſtice, to protect the widow and the orphan, to maintain order and religion. Yet he often permits them to violate equity, to oppreſs their people, and to become the ſcourges

of

of his anger. By them he frequently teacheth us how little account he makes of human grandeurs, seeing he bestows them sometimes upon unworthy men, upon men allured by voluptuousness, governed by ambition, and dazzled with their own glory, upon men who ridicule piety, sell their consciences, negociate faith and religion, sacrificing the souls of their children to the infamous passions that govern themselves.

Doth he prolong our life? it is because he *is long suffering to us*, 2 Pet. iii. 9. it is because he opens in our favour *the riches of his goodness and forbearance, to lead us to repentance*, Rom. ii. 4.

Doth he call us to die? it is to open those eternal books in which our actions are registered; it is to gather our souls into his bosom, *to bind them up in the bundle of life*, 1 Sam. xxv. 29. to mix them with the ransomed armies of all *nations, tongues, and people*, Rev. vii. 9.

Such are our ideas of the omnipresence of God. Thus God seeth all, influenceth all, directeth all. In this sense we are to understand this magnificent language of scripture, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee," 1 Kings viii. 27. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool," Isa. lxvi. 1. "Where is the house that ye build unto me? do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. Am I God at hand, and not afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?" Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. This is what the heathens had a glimpse of, when they said, that God was a circle, the centre of which was every where, and its circumference no where. That all things were full of Jupiter. That he filled all his works. That, fly whither we would, we were always before his eyes. This is what the followers of Mahomet meant, when they said, that

where

where there were two perſons, God made the third; where there were three, God made the fourth. Above all, this was our prophet's meaning throughout the Pſalm, a part of which we have explained. "O Lord, thou haſt ſearched me and known me. Thou knoweſt my down-ſitting and mine up-riſing, thou underſtandeſt my thoughts afar off. Thou compaſſeſt my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knoweſt it altogether. Thou haſt beſet me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, I cannot attain unto it. Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit? or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I aſcend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea; even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me. If I ſay, Surely the darkneſs ſhall cover me; even the night ſhall be light about me. Yea, the darkneſs hideth not from thee; but the night ſhineth as the day: the darkneſs and the light are both alike to thee," ver. 1, &c.

But perhaps, during the courſe of this meditation, you may have murmured at our preſenting an object, of which all the preaching in the world can give you only imperfect ideas. Suſpend your judgments; we are going to ſhew you whither this diſcourſe, all glimmering as it is, ought to conduct you. We are going to ſee what ſalutary conſequences follow our efforts, even the weak efforts that we have been making, to explain the grandeur and omnipreſence of God. Let us paſs to the concluſion, the chief deſign of this diſcourſe.

I. Our firſt reflection is on *the difficulties we meet with in fixing our* minds on ſuch ſubjects as

as we have been hearing. You have doubtleſs experienced, if you have endeavoured to follow us, that you are weary, and wander when you would go beyond matter. Our minds find almoſt nothing real, where they meet with nothing ſenſible. As if the whole eſſence of beings were corporeal, the mind loſeth its way when it ceaſeth to be directed by bodies, and it needs the help of imagination to repreſent even thoſe things which are not ſuſceptible of images; and yet whatever is moſt grand and noble in the nature of beings, is ſpirit. The ſublimeſt objects, angels who are continually before God, *ſeraphims* who *cover their faces* in his preſence, Iſa. vi. 2. cherubims who are the miniſters of his will, *thouſand thouſands which minister unto him, ten thouſand times ten thouſand which ſtand before him*, Dan. vii. 10. what is moſt glorious in man, what elevates him above other animals, a ſoul made in the image of God himſelf, the Being of beings, the Sovereign Beauty; all theſe beings are ſpiritual, abſtract, free from ſenſe and matter. Moreover, what pleaſes and enchants us in bodies, even that comes from a ſubject abſtract, ſpiritual and corporeal. Without your ſoul, aliments have no taſte, flowers no ſmell, the earth no enamel, fire no heat, the ſtars no brilliancy, the ſun no light. Matter of itſelf is void, and groſs, deſtitute of all the qualities with which our imagination clothes it, and which are proper to our ſouls. What ought we to conclude from this reflection? My brethren, have you no idea of your dignity, and primitive grandeur? Have you not even yet ſome faint reſemblances of beings formed in the Creator's image? You ought, feeble as you are, confined as you are in a manner to matter, you ſhould deplore your miſery; you ſhould groan under that neceſſity, which, in ſome ſort, confounds your ſouls with a little *duſt; you* ſhould ſigh after that happy ſtate in

which

which your rapid, free, and unclogged ſpirits, ſhall meditate like themſelves. This is the firſt duty we ſhould preſcribe to you.

2. Our next reflection is on *the majesty of our religion.* That muſt certainly be thought the true religion which gives us the nobleſt ideas of God. Let our religion be judged by this rule. Where do we ſee the attributes of the Supreme Being placed in ſo clear a light? what can be more noble than this idea of God? what can be conceived more ſublime than a Being whom nothing eſcapes, before whom *all things are naked and open*, Heb. iv. 13. who, by one ſingle look, fully comprehends all beings, paſt, preſent, and to come, all that do exiſt, all that poſſibly can exiſt; who thinks, in the ſame inſtant, with equal facility on bodies and ſpirits, on all the dimenſions of time and of matter? What more noble can be conceived than a Being who imparteth himſelf to all, diffuſeth himſelf through all, influenceth all, giveth life and motion to all? What can be conceived more noble than a Being who directeth the conduct of the whole univerſe, who knoweth how to make all concur to his deſigns, who knoweth how to connect alike with the laws of order and equity, the virtues of the righteous, the vices of the wicked, the praiſes of the happy, the blaſphemies of the victims ſacrificed to his vengeance in hell? When we find in any heathen philoſopher, amidſt a thouſand falſe notions, amidſt a thouſand wild imaginations, ſome few leaves of the flowers with which our bibles are ſtrewed, we are ready to cry a miracle, a miracle, we tranſmit theſe ſhreds of the Deity (if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo) to the moſt diſtant poſterity, and theſe ideas, all defective, and all defiled as they are, procure their authors immortal reputation. On this principle, what reſpect, what veneration, what deference ought we to have for the patriarchs and the prophets, for the evangeliſts

ists and the apostles, who spoke of God in so sublime a manner! However, be not surprised at their superiority over the great pagan geniuses; had the biblical writers, like them, been guided only by human reason, like them they would have wandered too. If they spoke so nobly of God, it was because they had received that *spirit who searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 10. It was because *all scripture was given by inspiration*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. It was because *the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. i. 21.

3. Make a third reflection. *This attribute of God removes the greatest stumbling-blocks that sceptics and infidels pretend to meet with in religion.* It justifies all those dark mysteries which are above the comprehension of our feeble reason. We would not make use of this reflection to open a way for human fancies, and to authorize every thing that is presented to us under the idea of the marvellous. All doctrines that are incomprehensible are not divine, nor ought we to embrace any opinion merely because it is beyond our knowledge. But when a religion, in other respects, hath good guarantees, when we have good arguments to prove that such a revelation comes from heaven, when we certainly know that it is God who speaks, ought we to be surprised, if ideas of God, which come so fully authenticated, absorb and confound us? I freely grant, that, had I consulted my own reason only, I could not have discovered some mysteries of the gospel. Nevertheless, when I think on the immensity of God, when I cast my eyes on that vast ocean, when I consider that immense all, nothing astonishes me, nothing stumbles me, nothing seems to me inadmissible, how incomprehensible soever it may be. When the subject is divine, I am ready *to believe* all, to admit all, to receive all; provided

vided I be convinced that it is God himſelf who ſpeaks to me, or any one on his part. After this, I am no more aſtoniſhed that there are three diſtinct perſons in one divine eſſence; one God, and yet a Father, a Son, and a Holy Ghoſt. After this, I am no more aſtoniſhed that God foreſees all without forcing any; permits ſin without forcing the ſinner; ordains free and intelligent creatures to ſuch and ſuch ends, yet without deſtroying their intelligence or their liberty. After this, I am no more aſtoniſhed that the juſtice of God required a ſatisfaction proportional to his greatneſs, that his own love hath provided that ſatisfaction, and that God, from the abundance of his compaſſion, deſigned the myſtery of an incarnate God; a myſtery which angels admire while ſceptics oppoſe; a myſtery which abſorbs human reaſon, but which fills all heaven with ſongs of praiſe; a myſtery which is the *great myſtery*, by excellence, 1 Tim. iii. 16. but the greatneſs of which nothing ſhould make us reject, ſince religion propoſeth it as the grand effort of the wiſdom of the incomprehenſible God, and commandeth us to receive it on the teſtimony of the incomprehenſible God himſelf. Either religion muſt tell us nothing about God, or what it tells us muſt be beyond our capacities, and, in diſcovering even the borders of this immenſe ocean, it muſt needs exhibit a vaſt extent in which our feeble eyes are loſt. But what ſurpriſes me, what ſtumbles me, what frightens me, is to ſee a diminutive creature, a contemptible man, a little ray of light glimmering through a few feeble organs, controvert a point with the Supreme Being, oppoſe that Intelligence who ſiteth at the helm of the world; queſtion what he affirms, diſpute what he determines, appeal from his deciſions, and, even after God hath given evidence, reject all doctrines that are beyond his capacity. Enter into thy nothingneſs, mortal

creature.

what Jesus Christ saw under the fig-tree, nor is it necessary now to inquire; but it was certainly something which, Nathaniel was fully persuaded, no mortal eye had seen. As soon, therefore, as Jesus Christ had uttered these words, he believed, and said, *Rabbi, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.* My brethren, God useth the same language to each of you to-day: *when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.*

Thou hypocrite, when wrapped in a veil of religion, embellished with exterior piety, thou concealedst an impious heart, and didst endeavour to impose on God and man, *I saw thee.* I penetrated all those labyrinths, I dissipated all those darknesses, I dived into all thy deep designs.

Thou worldling, who, with a prudence truly infernal, hast the art of giving a beautiful tint to the most odious objects; who appearest not to hate thy neighbour, because thou dost not openly attack him; not to falsify thy promise, because thou hast the art of eluding it; not to oppress thy dependents, because thou knowest how to impose silence on them: *I saw thee*, when thou gavest those secret stabs, when thou didst receive those bribes, and didst accumulate those wages of unrighteousness, which cry for vengeance against thee.

Thou slave to sensuality, ashamed of thine excesses before the face of the sun, *I saw thee*, when, with bars and bolts, with obscurity and darkness, and complicated precautions, thou didst hide thyself from the eyes of men, *defile the temple of God, and make the members of Christ the members of a harlot*, 1 Cor. vi. 15.

My brethren, the discourses, which we usually preach to you, absorb your minds in a multitude of ideas. A collection of moral ideas perhaps confound instead of instructing you, and when we attempt to engage you in too many reflections, you enter really into none. Behold an epitome

of

of religion. Behold a morality in three words. Return to your houſes, and every where carry this reflection with you, *God seeth me, God seeth me.* To all the wiles of the devil, to all the ſnares of the world, to all the baits of ſin, oppoſe this reflection, *God seeth me.* If, clothed with a human form, he were always in your path, were he to follow you to every place, were he always before you with his majeſtic face, with eyes flaſhing with lightning, with looks inſpiring terror, dare ye before his auguſt preſence give a looſe to your paſſions? But you have been hearing that his majeſtic face is every where, thoſe ſparkling eyes do inſpect you in every place, thoſe terrible looks do conſider you every where. Particularly, in the enſuing week, while you are preparing for the Lord's ſupper, recollect this. Let each examine his own heart, and endeavour to ſearch into his conſcience, where he may diſcover ſo much weakneſs, ſo much corruption, ſo much hardneſs, ſo many unclean ſources overflowing with ſo many exceſſes, and let this idea ſtrike each of you, *God seeth me.* God ſeeth me, as I ſee myſelf, unclean, ungrateful, and rebellious. O may this idea produce contrition and ſorrow, a juſt remorſe and a ſound converſion, a holy and a fervent communion, crowned with graces and virtues. Happy, if, after our examination, we have a new heart! a heart agreeable to thoſe eyes that ſearch and try it! Happy, if, after our communion, after a new examination, we can ſay with the prophet, *O Lord, thou haſt proved mine heart, thou haſt tried me, and haſt found nothing*, Pſal. xvii. 3. So be it. To God be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON II.

THE MANNER OF PRAISING GOD.

Preached after the adminiſtration of the Lord's Supper.

PSALM xxxiii. 1.

Praise is comely for the upright.

THERE is ſomething very noble, my brethren, in the end for which we are now aſſembled in the preſence of God. His providence hath infinitely diverſified the conditions of thoſe who compoſe this aſſembly. Some are placed in the moſt eminent, others in the moſt obſcure poſts of ſociety. Some live in ſplendor and opulence, others in meanneſs and indigence. One is employed in the turbulence of the army, another in the ſilence of the ſtudy. Notwithſtanding this infinite variety of employments, ranks, and ages, we all aſſemble to-day in one place; one object occupies us; one ſentiment animates us; one voice makes the church reſound, *Praise ye the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever*, Pſal. cxxxvi. 1. If there be an object, that can give a mortal any ideas of the firſt impreſſions, which are made on a ſoul, at its firſt entering the glorious palace of the bleſſed God in heaven, it is this. The firſt objects, that ſtrike ſuch a ſoul, are multitudes of all nations, tongues, and people, concentered in a meditation on the beneficence of God, proſtrating themſelves before his throne, caſting their crowns at his feet, and crying out of the abundance of their hearts, which contemplate the perfections of a Being worthy of their profoundeſt praiſe, *Amen, Bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and*

power,

power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever, Amen, Rev. vii. 12. "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and waſt, and art to come; becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned," chap. xi. 17. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of ſaints!" chap. xv. 3. "Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen," chap. i. 5. 6. This is the employment of the bleſſed in heaven: this is what we are doing to-day on earth.

But what a contradiction, what a contraſt appears, when, lifting up the exterior habit of piety, that covers ſome of us, we examine the inward diſpoſitions of the heart. The pſalms, which are uttered with the voice, are contradicted by the tempers of the heart. The mouths, that were juſt now opened to bleſs the Creator, will preſently be opened again to blaſpheme and to curſe him. The praiſes, which ſeemed ſo proper to pleaſe him in whoſe honour they were offered, will incur this reproof, Thou *wicked* man! *What haſt thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?* Pſal. l. 16.

My brethren, if we would join our voices with thoſe of angels, we muſt have the ſentiments of angels. We muſt, (at leaſt as far as the duty is imitable by ſuch frail creatures) we muſt, in order to worſhip God, as thoſe happy ſpirits praiſe him, love him as they do, ſerve him as they do, devote ourſelves to him as they devote themſelves to him; and this is the manner of praiſing God, to which I exhort, and in which I would endeavour to inſtruct you to-day, agreeably to the prophet's exalted notion of it in the words of the text. What day can be more proper to inſpire ſuch a noble deſign? What day can be more proper to

engage

engage you to mix your worſhip with that of glorified intelligences, than this, on which we are come *unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the firſt-born which are written in heaven?* Heb. xii. 22, 23.

But, who are we, to be admitted into a ſociety ſo holy? Great God! Thou doſt appear to us to-day, as thou didſt formerly to thy prophet, *ſitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and thy train filling the temple*, Iſa. vi. 1. Around thee ſtand the ſeraphims, covering themſelves with their wings in thy majeſtic preſence, and crying one to another, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hoſts, the whole earth is full of his glory*, ver. 3. We are ſtricken, as thy prophet was, with ſuch a tremendous viſion, and each of us cries with him, *Woe is me! I am undone! I am a man of unclean lips!* and yet, *mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of hoſts*, ver. 5. O great God! command one of thy ſeraphims to fly to us, as he flew to him; bid him touch our mouths, as he touched his, with *a live coal taken from off the altar*, ver. 6. and, in this day of grace and mercy, let him ſay to each of us, *Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy ſin purged! Amen*, ver. 7.

"Praiſe is comely for the upright." The praiſing of God is a duty, of which we may form two different notions, a *general* and a *particular* notion. By a *general* notion of praiſe, I mean, the exerciſe of a man, who, being capable of examining ſublime objects, and of comprehending grand ſubjects, fixeth his attention on the attributes of God, feels the force of thoſe proofs which eſtabliſh the truth of them, is delighted with them to a certain degree, and is happy in publiſhing their praiſe. I mean, by a *particular* notion of praiſing God, the exerciſe of a man,

who, having received some signal favour of God, loves to express his gratitude for it.

Each of these exercises of praise supposeth *reflections* and *sentiments*. To praise God in the first sense, to reflect on his attributes, to converse, and to write about them, without having the heart affected, and without loving a Being, who is described as supremely amiable, is a lifeless praise, more fit for a worldly philosopher than for a rational christian. To praise God in the second sense, to be affected with the favours of God, without having any distinct notions of God, without knowing whether the descriptions of the perfections, that are attributed to him, be flights of fancy or real truths, is an exercise more fit for a bigot, who believes without knowing why, than for a *spiritual man, who judgeth all things*, 1 Cor. ii. 15. If we distinguish the part, which these two faculties, reflection and sentiment, take in these two exercises of praise, we may observe that the first, I mean the praise of God taken in a general sense, is the fruit of *reflection*, and the second of *sentiment*. The first is, if I may be allowed to speak so, the praise of the mind; the second is the praise of the heart.

It is difficult to determine which of these two notions prevails in the text, whether the psalmist use the word *praise* in the first or in the second sense. If we judge by the whole subject of the psalm, both are included. The praise of the heart is easily discovered. Whether the author of the psalm were Hezekiah, as many of the fathers thought, who say, this prince composed it after the miraculous defeat of Senacherib; or whether, which is most likely, David were the composer of it, after one of those preternatural deliverances, with which his life was so often signalized; what I call the praise of the heart, that is, a lively sense of some inestimable blessing, is clearly to be seen. On the other hand, it is still

clearer,

clearer, that the ſacred author doth not celebrate only one particular object in the pſalm. He gives a greater ſcope to his meditation, and compriſeth in it all the works, and all the perfections of God.

Although the ſolemnity of this day calls us leſs to the praiſe of the mind, than to that of the heart; although we intend to make the latter the principal ſubject of this diſcourſe; yet it is neceſſary to attend a little to the former.

I. *The praiſe of the Lord*, taking the word praiſe in the vague ſenſe, that we have affixed to the term, *is comely for the upright*: and it is comely for none but for them.

"Praiſe is comely for the upright." Nothing is more worthy of the attention of an intelligent being, particularly, nothing is more worthy of the imitation of a ſuperior genius, than the wonderful perfections of the Creator. A man of ſuperior genius is required, indeed, to uſe his talents to cultivate the ſciences and the liberal arts; but after all, the mind of man, eſpecially of that man to whom God hath given ſuperior talents, which aſſimilate him to celeſtial intelligences, was not created to unravel a point in chronology, to learn the various ſounds by which different nations ſignify their ideas, to meaſure a line, or to loſe itſelf in an algebraic calculation; the mind of ſuch a man was not created to ſtudy the ſtars, to count their number, to meaſure their magnitude, to diſcover more than have yet been obſerved. Nobler objects ought to occupy him. It becomes ſuch a man to contemplate God, to guide the reſt of mankind, to lead them to God, who *dwelleth in the light, which no man can approach unto*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. and to teach us to attenuate the clouds, that hide him from our feeble eyes. It becomes ſuch a man to uſe that ſuperiority, which his knowledge gives him over us, to elevate our hearts above the low region of terreſtrial things,

things, where they grovel with the brute beaſts, and to help us to place them on the bright abode of the immortal God. The *praiſe* of the Lord *is comely for upright men.*

But praiſe is comely *only for upright men.* I believe it is needleſs now to explain the word *uprightness.* The term is taken in the text in the nobleſt ſenſe: this is a ſufficient explication, and this is ſufficient alſo to convince us that the praiſing of God is comely for none but upright men. I cannot ſee, without indignation, a philoſopher trifle with the important queſtions that relate to the attributes of God, and make them ſimple exerciſes of genius, in which the heart hath no concern, examining whether there be a God, with the ſame indifference with which he inquires whether there be a vacuum in nature, or whether matter be infinitely diviſible. On determining the queſtions which relate to the divine attributes, depend our hopes and fears, the plans we muſt form, and the courſe of life we ought to purſue; and with theſe views we ſhould examine the perfections of God; theſe are conſequences that ſhould follow our inquiries. With ſuch diſpoſitions the pſalmiſt celebrated the praiſes of God, in the pſalm out of which we have taken the text. How comely are the praiſes of God in the mouth of ſuch a man!

Let us follow the holy man a moment in his meditation. His pſalm is not compoſed in ſcholaſtic form, in which the author confines himſelf to fixed rules, and ſcrupulouſly following a philoſophical method, lays down principles, and infers conſequences. However, he eſtabliſheth principles the moſt proper to give us ſublime ideas of the Creator; and he ſpeaks with more preciſion of the works and attributes of God, than the greateſt philoſophers have ſpoken them.

How abſurdly have philoſophers treated of the *origin of* the world? How few of them have

reaſoned

reaſoned concluſively on this important ſubject? Our prophet ſolves the important queſtion by one ſingle principle, and what is more remarkable, this principle, which is nobly expreſſed, carries the cleareſt evidence with it. The principle is this: *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.* This is the moſt rational account that was ever given of the creation of the world. The world is the work of a ſelf-efficient will, and it is this principle alone that can account for its creation. The moſt ſimple appearances in nature are ſufficient to lead us to this principle. Either my will is ſelf-efficient, or there is ſome other being whoſe will is ſelf-efficient.

What I ſay of myſelf I ſay of my parents, and what I affirm of my parents I affirm of my more remote anceſtors, and of all the finite creatures from whom they derived their exiſtence. Moſt certainly, either finite beings have ſelf-efficient wills, which it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe, for a finite creature with a ſelf-efficient will is a contradiction; either, I ſay, a finite creature hath a ſelf-efficient will, or there is a firſt cauſe who hath a ſelf-efficient will; and that there is ſuch a being, is the principle of the pſalmiſt: *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

If philoſophers have reaſoned inconcluſively on the origin of the world, they have ſpoken of its government with equal uncertainty. The pſalmiſt determines this queſtion with great facility, by a ſingle principle, which reſults from the former, and which, like the former, carries its evidence with it. "The Lord looketh from heaven: he conſidereth all the works of all the inhabitants of the earth," ver. 13, 14. This is the doctrine of Providence. And on what is the doctrine of Providence founded? On this principle: God *faſhioneth their hearts alike*, ver. 15.

Attend

Attend a moment to the evidence of this reaſoning, my brethren. The doctrine of Providence, expreſſed in theſe words, *God conſidereth the works of the inhabitants of the earth*, is a neceſſary conſequence of this principle, *God faſhioneth their hearts alike*; and this principle is a neceſſary conſequence of that which the pſalmiſt had before laid down to account for the origin of the world. Yes! from the doctrine of God the Creator of men, follows that of God the inſpector, the director, the rewarder, and the puniſher of their actions. One of the moſt ſpecious objections, that hath ever been oppoſed to the doctrine of Providence, is a contraſt between the grandeur of God and the meanneſs of men. How can ſuch an inſignificant creature as man, be an object of the care and attention of ſuch a magnificent Being as God? No objection can be more ſpecious, or, in appearance, more invincible. The diſtance between the meaneſt inſect and the mightieſt monarch, who treads and cruſhes reptiles to death without the leaſt regard to them, is a very imperfect image of the diſtance between God and man. That which proves that it would be beneath the dignity of a monarch to obſerve the motions of ants, or worms, to intereſt himſelf in their actions, to puniſh, or to reward them, ſeems to demonſtrate, that God would degrade himſelf were he to obſerve, to direct, to puniſh, to reward mankind, who are infinitely inferior to him. But, one fact is ſufficient to anſwer this ſpecious objection: That is, that God hath created mankind. Doth God degrade himſelf more by governing than by creating mankind? Who can perſuade himſelf, that a wiſe Being hath given to intelligent creatures faculties capable of obtaining knowledge and virtue, without willing that they ſhould endeavour to acquire knowledge and virtue? Or who can imagine, that a wiſe Being, who willeth that his intelligent creatures

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ſhould acquire knowledge and virtue, will not puniſh them, if they neglect thoſe acquiſitions; and will not ſhew, by the diſtribution of his benefits, that he approves their endeavours to obtain them?

Unenlightened philoſophers have treated of the attributes of God with as much abſtruſeneſs as they have written of his works. The *moral attributes* of God, as they are called in the ſchools, were myſteries which they could not unfold. Theſe may be reduced to two claſſes, attributes of *goodness* and attributes of *juſtice*. Philoſophers, who have admitted theſe, have uſually taken that for granted which they ought to have proved. They collected together in their minds all perfections, they reduced them all to one object, which they denominated *a perfect Being*; and ſuppoſing, without proving, that a perfect Being exiſted, they attributed to him, without proof, every thing that they conſidered as a perfection. The pſalmiſt ſhews, by a ſurer way, that there is a God ſupremely juſt, and ſupremely good. It is neceſſary, in order to convince a rational being of the juſtice and goodneſs of God, to follow ſuch a method as that which we follow to prove his exiſtence. When we would prove the exiſtence of God, we ſay, there are creatures; therefore, there is a Creator. In like manner, when we would prove, that the Creator is a juſt and a good Being, we ſay, there are qualities of goodneſs and juſtice in creatures; therefore, he, from whom theſe creatures derive their exiſtence, is a Being juſt and good. Now this is the reaſoning of the pſalmiſt, in this pſalm: *The Lord loveth righteousness and judgment, the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord*, ver. 5. that is to ſay, it is impoſſible to conſider the works of the Creator, without receiving evidence of his goodneſs. All the works of nature, which demonſtrate the goodneſs of God, prove his juſtice

alſo; for God hath created us with ſuch diſpoſitions, that we cannot enjoy the gifts of his goodneſs without obeying the laws of his righteouſneſs. The happineſs of an individual, who procures a pleaſure by diſobeying the laws of equity, is a violent happineſs, which cannot be of long duration; and the proſperity of public bodies, when it is founded in iniquity, is an edifice, which with its baſes will be preſently ſunk and gone.

But what we would particularly remark is, that the excellent principles of the pſalmiſt, concerning God, are not mere ſpeculations, but truths from which he derives practical inferences; and he aims to extend their influence beyond private perſons, even to legiſlators and conquerors. One would think, conſidering the conduct of mankind, that the conſequences, which are drawn from the doctrines of which we have been ſpeaking, belong to none but to the dregs of the people; that law-givers and conquerors have a plan of morality peculiar to themſelves, and are above the rules to which other men muſt ſubmit. Our prophet had other notions. What are his maxims of policy? They are all included in theſe words: *Bleſſed is the nation whoſe God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath choſen for his own inheritance*, ver. 12. What are his military maxims? They are all included in theſe words: *There is no king ſaved by the multitude of an hoſt: a mighty man is not delivered by much ſtrength: An horſe is a vain thing for ſafety, neither ſhall he deliver any by his great ſtrength*, ver. 16, 17. Who propoſeth theſe maxims? A hermit, who never appeared on the theatre of the world? or a man deſtitute of the talents neceſſary to ſhine there? No: one of the wiſeſt of kings; one of the moſt bold and able generals; a man, whom God himſelf elected to govern his choſen people, and to command

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thoſe armies, which fought the moſt obſtinate battles, and gained the moſt complete victories. Were I to proceed in explaining the ſyſtem of the pſalmiſt, I might prove, that as he had a right to infer the doctrine of Providence from the works of nature, and that of the moral attributes of God from the works of creation; ſo, from the doctrines of the moral attributes of God, of Providence, and of the works of creation, he had a right to conclude, that no conquerors or law-givers could be truly happy, but thoſe who acted agreeably to the laws of the juſt and good Supreme. But I ſhall not enlarge on this article.

Permit me only to place in one point of view the different phraſes, by which the pſalmiſt deſcribes the Deity in this pſalm. "The earth is full of the goodneſs of the Lord. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the ſea together, as an heap: he layeth up the depth in ſtorehouſes. The Lord looketh from heaven: he beholdeth all the ſons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He faſhioneth their hearts alike; he conſidereth all their works," ver. 5—7, 13—15.

From theſe ſpeculative ideas of God, he derives the following rules of practice. "Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world ſtand in awe of him. Our ſoul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our ſhield. For our heart ſhall rejoice in him, becauſe we have truſted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us according as we hope in thee," ver. 8, 20—22. How delightful it is, my brethren, to ſpeak of God, when one hath talents to ſpeak of him in ſuch a noble manner, and when one intends to promote the fear and the love of him, with an univerſal obedience to him, from all that is ſaid! How well it becomes

dangers that daily threaten them; and so little thankful for his miraculous patience with us, to which it is owing, that, after we have hardened our hearts against his voice one year, he invites us another year; after we have falsified our promises made on one solemnity, he calls us to another solemnity, and giveth us new opportunities of being more faithful to him? Whence comes this difference? Follow it to its source. Does it not proceed from what we just now said? Is not love of the world, and of sensible things, the grand spring of our actions and sentiments? The world, the world; lo! this is the touchstone, by which we judge of good and evil!

An *upright* man judgeth in another manner: he will, indeed, bless God for all his benefits; but as he knows how to arrange them, so he knows how to prize each according to its worth, and how to apportion his esteem to the real value of them all.

According to such an estimation, what ought not our gratitude to God be to-day, my dear brethren! We may assure ourselves with the utmost truth, that had the Lord united in our houses to-day, pleasures, grandeurs, and dignities; had he promised each of us a life longer than that of a patriarch; a family as happy as that of Job, after his misfortunes; glory as great as that of Solomon; he would have bestowed nothing equal to that blessing, which he gave us this morning. He forgave those sins, which, had they taken their natural course, would have occasioned endless remorse, and would have plunged us into everlasting misery and woe. A peace was *shed abroad* in our consciences, which gave us a foretaste of heaven. He excited hopes, that absorbed our souls in their grandeur. Let us say all in one word: he gave us his Son. "He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32.

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2. The gratitude of upright men is *real.* The praiſe of the Lord becomes them, becauſe, while they praiſe God for his benefits, they live to the glory of their benefactor. Every gift of God furniſheth us with both a motive and a mean of obedience to him. It is an exceſs of ingratitude to make a contrary uſe of his gifts, and to turn the benefits that we receive, againſt the benefactor from whom we receive them. What gifts are they, by which God hath moſt diſtinguiſhed us? Thee he hath diſtinguiſhed by a penetrating genius, which renders the higheſt objects, the deepeſt myſteries, acceſſible to thee. Wo be to thee! if thou employ this gift to invent arguments againſt the truths of religion, and to find out ſophiſms that befriend infidelity. An *upright* man devotes this gift to his benefactor; he avails himſelf of his genius, to diſcover the folly of ſceptical ſophiſms, and to demonſtrate the truth of religion. On thee he hath beſtowed an aſtoniſhing memory. Wo be to thee! if thou uſe it to retain the pernicious maxims of the world. An *upright* man dedicates this gift to his benefactor; he employs his memory in retaining the excellent leſſons of equity, charity, and patience, which the holy Spirit hath taught him in the ſcriptures. To thee he hath given an authoritative elocution, to which every hearer is forced to bow. Wo be to thee! if thou apply this rare talent to ſeduce the minds, and to deprave the hearts, of mankind. An *upright* man devotes this bleſſing to the ſervice of his benefactor; he uſeth his eloquence to free the minds of men from error, and their lives from vice. Towards thee God hath exerciſed a patience, which ſeems contrary to his uſual rules of conduct towards ſinners, and by which he hath abounded toward thee in forbearance and long-ſuffering. Wo be to thee! if thou turn this bleſſing into an opportunity of violating the commands of God; if

thy heart being infatuated with one object, and wholly employed about it, thou didſt make it thine idol, and didſt ſacrifice to it thine honour, thy duty, thy God. Recollect, thou! the cruel uſe, that for many years thou didſt make of thy credit, thy riches, thy rank, when, being devoured with ſelf-love, thou waſt inſenſible to the voice of the widow and the orphan, and to a number of diſtreſſed people, who ſolicited relief. Remember, thou! that fatal hour, the recollection of which ought to make thy *head waters, and thine eyes a fountain of tears*, Jer. ix. 1. that fatal hour, in which, God having put thee into the fiery trial of perſecution, thou couldſt not abide the proof. Like Peter, thou didſt not know a diſgraced Redeemer; thou didſt cowardly abandon a perſecuted church, and waſt juſt on the point of abjuring thy religion. Let each of us ſo conſider himſelf as he ſeems in the eyes of a holy God. A criminal worthy of the moſt rigorous puniſhments! Let each of us ſay to himſelf, Notwithſtanding all this, it is I, guilty I; I, whoſe ſins are more in number than the hairs on my head; it is I, who have been admitted this morning into the houſe of God; it is I, who have been invited this morning to that myſtical repaſt, which ſovereign wiſdom itſelf prepared; it is I, who have been encouraged againſt the juſt fears, which the remembrance of my ſins had excited, and have heard the voice of God, proclaiming in my conſcience, *Fear not, thou worm Jacob*, Iſa. xli. 14. It is I, who have been *abundantly ſatisfied with the fatness of the houſe* of God, and have *drunk of the river of his pleaſures*, Pſal. xxxvi. 8. What inclines God to indulge me in this manner? Goodneſs only! O ſurpaſſing and inconceivable goodneſs! thou ſhalt for ever be the object of my meditation and gratitude! "How excellent is thy loving kindneſs, O God!" ver. 7. Theſe are ſentiments that

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ought to animate our praiſe to-day. Such *praiſe is comely for the upright.*

Finally, The gratitude of an upright man is *noble* and *magnanimous.* The praiſe of God well becomes the mouth of an upright man, becauſe he takes the love of God to him for a pattern of his behaviour to his fellow creatures. St. Paul hath very emphatically expreſſed the happy change which the goſpel produceth in true chriſtians. "We all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the ſpirit of the Lord," 2. Cor. iii. 18. Some commentators, inſtead of reading *we all beholding as in a glaſs*, as the expreſſion is rendered in our tranſlation, render the words, *we all becoming mirrors.* I will not undertake to prove that this is the meaning of the term: it is certainly the ſenſe of the apoſtle.* He means to inform us, that the impreſſion, which the evangelical diſplay of

* The idea of *reflecting*, while one contemplates *the attributes of God*, is a very fine thought, and fully expreſſive of the benevolent effects which chriſtianity produceth in its diſciples; but Mr. Saurin, whoſe buſineſs as a chriſtian miniſter was not with *the fine*, but *the true*, only meant, by what he ſaid above, that it was agreeable to *the general deſign* of the apoſtle. Eraſmus was the firſt who tranſlated St. Paul's term *katoptrizomenoi* in ſpeculo *repræſentantes*. Beza renders it, in ſpeculo *intuentes*; and our French bibles have it, nous *contemplons* comme en un miroir. Our author was delighted with the ingenuity of Eraſmus; however, he could not accede to his tranſlation, becauſe, 1. He could meet with no Greek author, cotemporary with St. Paul, who had uſed the term in the ſenſe of Eraſmus. 2. Becauſe he could not perceive any connexion between that ſignification and the phraſe *with open face*. He abode therefore by the uſual reading. See Serm. Tom. ix. S. viii. My idea of an object pleaſes me, therefore it is a true idea of it, is contemptible logic: yet how many pretended articles of religion have riſen from this way of reaſoning!

of the perfections of God makes on the ſouls of believers, engraves them on their minds, and renders them like mirrors, that reflect the rays, and the objects which are placed oppoſite to them, and repreſent their images. *They behold the glory of the Lord with open face. They are changed from glory to glory into the same image, even as by the ſpirit of the Lord.* I wiſh, my brethren, that the impreſſion, which was made on you by the generoſity and magnanimity of God, who loaded you this morning with his gracious benefits, may transform you to-day *into the same image from glory to glory.* I would animate you with this, the moſt noble, the moſt ſublime, the moſt comfortable, way of praiſing God.

What gave you ſo much peace and pleaſure this morning, in what God did for you? Was it the pardon of your ſins? Imitate it; pardon your brethren. Was it his paſt forbearance with you? Imitate it; moderate that impatience which the ingratitude of your brethren excites in your minds. Was it that ſpirit of communication, which diſpoſed a God, who is all-ſufficient to his own happineſs, to go out of himſelf, as it were, and to communicate his felicity to creatures? Imitate it; go out of thoſe intrenchments of proſperity in which you lodge, and impart your benefits to your brethren. Was it the continual watchfulneſs of God for the ſalvation of your ſouls? Imitate it; exert yourſelves for the ſalvation of the ſouls of your brethren; ſuffer not thoſe, who are united to you by all the ties of nature, ſociety, and religion, to periſh through your lukewarmneſs and negligence. While you triumphantly exclaim, on this ſolemn feſtival, *Let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation!* Pſal. xcv. 1. remember your perſecuted brethren, to whom God refuſeth this pleaſure; remember *the ways of Zion*, that *mourn, because none come to the ſolemn feaſts*, Lam. i. 4.

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My brethren, how pleaſing is a chriſtian feſtival! How comfortable the inſtitution, to which we were this morning called! But I remember here a ſaying of Jeſus Chriſt to his apoſtles, *I have other sheep which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd*, John x. 16. Alas! we alſo have ſheep in another fold. When ſhall we have the comfort of bringing them into this? Ye divided families! who are preſent in this aſſembly, when will you be united? Ye children of the reformation! whom the misfortunes of the times have torn from us; ye dear parts of ourſelves! when will you come to us? When will you be re-gathered to the flock of the great *shepherd and bishop of our souls?* When will ye ſhed in our aſſemblies tears of repentance, for having lived ſo long without a church, without ſacraments, without public worſhip? When will ye ſhed tears of joy for having recovered theſe advantages?

Great God! Thou great *God who hidest thyself!* is it to extinguiſh, or to enflame our zeal, that thou delayeſt the happy period? Are our hopes ſuſpended or confounded? God grant, my dear brethren, that the *praise*, which we render to the Lord for all his benefits, may obtain their continuance and increaſe! And God grant, while he giveth us our *lives for a prey*, Jer. xxi. 9. that thoſe of our brethren may be given us alſo! To him be honour and glory for ever! Amen.

SERMON III.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE CHURCH.

ROMANS xiv. 7, 8.

None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For, whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.

THESE words are a general maxim, which St. Paul lays down for the deciſion of a particular controverſy. We cannot well enter into the apoſtle's meaning, unleſs we underſtand the particular ſubject, which led him to expreſs himſelf in this manner. Our firſt reflections, therefore, will tend to explain the ſubject, and afterward we will extend our meditations to greater objects. We will attend to the text in that point of view, in which thoſe chriſtians are moſt intereſted, who have repeatedly engaged to devote themſelves wholly to Jeſus Chriſt; to conſecrate to him through life, and to commit to him at death, not only with ſubmiſſion, but alſo with joy, thoſe ſouls, over which he hath acquired the nobleſt right. Thus ſhall we verify, in the moſt pure and elevated of all ſenſes, this saying of the apoſtle, *None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For, whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.*

St. Paul propoſed in the text, and in ſome of the preceding and following verſes, to eſtabliſh the doctrine of toleration. By toleration, we mean, that diſpoſition of a chriſtian, which, on a

principle of benevolence, inclines him to hold communion with a man, who, through weakneſs of mind, mixeth with the truths of religion ſome errors, that are not entirely incompatible with it; and with the new teſtament worſhip ſome ceremonies, which are unſuitable to its elevation and ſimplicity, but which, however, do not deſtroy its eſſence.

Retain every part of this definition, for each is eſſential to the ſubject defined. I ſay, that he, who exerciſeth toleration, acts on a principle of benevolence; for were he to act on a principle of indolence, or of contempt for religion, his diſpoſition of mind, far from being a virtue worthy of praiſe, would be a vice fit only for execration. Toleration, I ſay, is to be exerciſed towards him only, who errs through *weakneſs of mind*; for he, who perſiſts in his error through arrogance, and for the ſake of rending the church, deſerves rigorous puniſhment. I ſay, further, that he, who exerciſeth toleration, doth not confine himſelf to praying for him, who is the object of it, and to endeavouring to reclaim him; he proceeds further, and *holds communion* with him; that is to ſay, he aſſiſts at the ſame religious exerciſes, and partakes of the Lord's ſupper at the ſame table. Without this communion, can we conſider him, whom we pretend to tolerate, as a brother in the ſenſe of St. Paul? I add, finally, *erroneous ſentiments*, which are tolerated, *muſt be compatible with the great truths of religion; and obſervances*, which are tolerated, *muſt not deſtroy the eſſence of evangelical worſhip*, although they are incongruous with its ſimplicity and glory. How can I aſſiſt in a ſervice, which, in my opinion, is an inſult on the God whom I adore? How can I approach the table of the Lord with a man, who rejects all the myſteries, which God exhibits there? and ſo of the reſt.

Retain,

Retain, then, all the parts of this definition, and you will form a juſt notion of *toleration.*

This moderation, always neceſſary among chriſtians, was particularly ſo in the primitive ages of chriſtianity. The firſt churches were compoſed of two ſorts of proſelytes; ſome of them were born of Jewiſh parents, and had been educated in Judaiſm, others were converted from paganiſm; and both, generally ſpeaking, after they had embraced chriſtianity, preſerved ſome traces of the religions which they had renounced. Some of them retained ſcruples, from which juſt notions of chriſtian liberty, it ſhould ſeem, might have freed them. They durſt not eat ſome foods which God gave for the nouriſhment of mankind, I mean, the fleſh of animals, and they ate only *herbs.* They ſet apart certain *days* for devotional exerciſes: not from that wiſe motive, which ought to engage every rational man to take a portion of his life from the tumult of the world, in order to conſecrate it to the ſervice of his Creator; but from I know not what notion of pre-eminence, which they attributed to ſome days above others. Thus far all are agreed in regard to the deſign of St. Paul in the text.

Nor is there any difficulty in determining which of the two orders of chriſtians, of whom we ſpoke, St. Paul conſiders as an object of toleration; whether that claſs which came from the Gentiles, or that which came from the Jews. It is plain the laſt is intended. Every body knows that the law of Moſes ordained a great number of feaſts under the penalty of the great anathema. It was very natural for the converted Jews to retain a fear of incurring that penalty, which followed the infraction of thoſe laws, and to carry their veneration for thoſe feſtivals too far.

There was one whole ſect among the Jews, that abſtained entirely from the fleſh of animals; they

they were the *Essenes*. Josephus expressly affirms this; and Philo assures us, that their tables were free from every thing that had blood, and were served with only bread, salt, and hyssop. As the Essenes professed a severity of manners, which had some likeness to the morality of Jesus Christ, it is probable, many of them embraced christianity, and in it interwove a part of the peculiarities of their own sect.

I do not think, however, that St. Paul had any particular view to the Essenes; at least, we are not obliged to suppose, that his views were confined to them. All the world know, that Jews have an aversion to blood. A Jew, exact in his religion, does not eat flesh now-a-days with christians, lest the latter should not have taken sufficient care to discharge the blood. When, therefore, St. Paul describes converted Jews by their scrupulosity in regard to the eating of blood, he does not speak of what they did in their own families, but of what they practised, when they were invited to a convivial repast with people, who thought themselves free from the prohibition of eating blood, whether they were Gentiles yet involved in the darkness of paganism, or Gentile converts to christianity. Thus far our subject is free from difficulty.

The difficulty lies in the connexion of the maxim in the text with the end, which St. Paul proposeth in establishing it. What relation is there between christian toleration and this maxim, *None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself?* How doth it follow from this principle, *whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or, whether we die, we die unto the Lord;* how doth it follow from this principle, that we ought to tolerate those, who, through the weakness of their minds, mix some errors with the grand truths of christianity, and with the new testament worship some ceremonies, which obscure its simplicity, and debase its glory? The

The ſolution lies in the connexion of the text with the foregoing verſes, and particularly with the fourth verſe, *who art thou, that judgeſt another man's ſervant?* To *judge*, in this place, does not ſignify to diſcern, but to *condemn*. The word has this meaning in a hundred paſſages of the new teſtament. I confine myſelf to one paſſage for example. "If we judge ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged," 1 Cor. xi. 31. that is to ſay, if we would condemn ourſelves at the tribunal of repentance, after we have partaken unworthily of the Lord's ſupper, we ſhould not be condemned at the tribunal of divine juſtice. In like manner, *who art thou, that judgeſt another man's ſervant?* is as much as to ſay, *who art thou that condemneſt?* St. Paul meant to make the chriſtians of Rome underſtand, that it belonged only to the ſovereign of the church to abſolve or to condemn, as he ſaw fit.

But who is the ſupreme head of the church? Jeſus Chriſt, Jeſus Chriſt, who, with his Father, *is over all, God bleſſed for ever*, Rom. ix. 5. Jeſus Chriſt, by dying for the church, acquired this ſupremacy, and in virtue of it all true chriſtians render him the homage of adoration. All this is clearly expreſſed by our apoſtle, and gives us an occaſion to treat of one of the moſt abſtruſe points of chriſtian theology.

That Jeſus Chriſt is the ſupreme head of the church, according to the doctrine of St. Paul, is expreſſed by the apoſtle in the moſt clear and explicit manner; for after he hath ſaid, in the words of the text, *whether we live, or die, we are the Lord's*, he adds immediately, *for to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

That this Jeſus, *whoſe*, the apoſtle ſays, *we are*, is God, the apoſtle does not permit us to doubt; for he confounds the expreſſions *to eat to the Lord*, and *to give God thanks*; to *ſtand be-*

fore the judgment seat of Christ, and to *give account of himself to God*; to be *Lord both of the dead and living*, ver. 6, 10, 12. and this majestic language, which would be blasphemy in the mouth of a simple creature, *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God*, ver. 11.

Finally, That Jesus Christ acquired that supremacy by his sufferings and death, in virtue of which all true christians render him the homage of adoration, the apostle establisheth, if possible, still more clearly. This appears by the words just now cited, *to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*, ver. 8, 11. To the same purpose the apostle speaks in the epistle to the Philippians, "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This is the sovereignty which Jesus Christ acquired by dying for the church.

But the most remarkable, and at the same time the most difficult article on this subject, is this. These texts, which seem to establish the divinity of Christ in a manner so clear, furnish the greatest objection, that hath ever been proposed against it. True, say the enemies of this doctrine, Jesus Christ is God, since the scripture commands us to worship him. But his divinity is an acquired divinity; since that supremacy, which entitles him to adoration as God, is not an essential, but an acquired supremacy. Now, that this supremacy is acquired, is indubitable, since the texts, that have been cited, expressly declare, that it is a fruit of his sufferings and death. We have two *arguments* to offer in reply. I. If

1. If it were demonſtrated, that the ſupremacy eſtabliſhed in the forecited texts was only acquired, and not eſſential, it would not therefore follow, that Jeſus Chriſt had no other ſupremacy belonging to him in common with the Father and the holy Spirit. We are commanded to worſhip Jeſus Chriſt, not only becauſe he died for us, but alſo becauſe he is eternal and almighty, the author of all beings that exiſt; and becauſe he hath all the perfections of Deity, as we can prove by other paſſages, not neceſſary to be repeated here.

2. Nothing hinders that the true God, who, as the true God, merits our adoration, ſhould acquire every day new rights over us, in virtue of which we have new motives of rendering thoſe homages to him, which we acknowledge he always infinitely merited. Always when God beſtows a new bleſſing, he acquireth a new right. What was Jacob's opinion, when he made this vow? "If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, ſo that I come again to my father's houſe in peace; then ſhall the Lord be my God," Gen. xxviii. 20, &c. Did the patriarch mean, that he had no other reaſon for regarding the Lord as his God, than this favour, which he aſked of him? No ſuch thing. He meant, that to a great many reaſons, which bound him to devote himſelf to God, the favour which he aſked would add a new one. It would be eaſy to produce a long liſt of examples of this kind. At preſent the application of this one ſhould ſuffice. Jeſus Chriſt, who, as ſupreme God, hath natural rights over us, hath alſo acquired rights, becauſe he hath deigned to clothe himſelf with our fleſh, in which he died to redeem us. *None of us is his own*, we are all his, not only becauſe he is our Creator, but becauſe he is alſo our Redeemer. He hath a ſupremacy over us peculiar to himſelf, and diſtinct from that, which

which he hath in common with the Father and the holy Spirit.

To return then to our principal ſubject, from which this long digreſſion hath diverted us. This Jeſus, who is the ſupreme head of the church; this Jeſus, to whom all the members of the church are ſubject; willeth that we ſhould tolerate, and he himſelf hath tolerated, thoſe, who, having in other caſes an upright conſcience, and a ſincere intention of ſubmitting their reaſon to all his deciſions, and their hearts to all his commands, cannot clearly ſee, that chriſtian liberty includes a freedom from the obſervation of certain feaſts, and from the diſtinction of certain foods. If the ſovereign of the church tolerate them, who err in this manner, by what right do you, who are only ſimple ſubjects, undertake to condemn them? "Who art thou, that judgeſt another man's ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth. For none of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. Let us not therefore judge one another any more." Let us, *who are ſtrong, bear the infirmities of the weak.*

This is the deſign of St. Paul in the words of my text, in ſome of the preceding, and in ſome of the following verſes. Can we proceed without remarking, or without lamenting, the blindneſs of thoſe chriſtians, who, by their intolerance to their brethren, ſeem to have choſen for their model thoſe members of the church of Rome, who violate the rights of toleration in the moſt cruel manner? We are not ſpeaking of thoſe ſanguinary men, who aim at illuminating people's minds with the light of fires, and faggots, which they kindle againſt all who reject their ſyſtems. Our tears, and our blood, have not aſſuaged their

rage;

rage; how can we then think to appeaſe it by our exhortations? Let us not ſolicit the wrath of heaven againſt theſe perſecutors of the church; let us leave to the ſouls of them, who were ſlain for the word of God, to cry, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them, that dwell on the earth?* Rev. vi. 10.

But, ye inteſtine diviſions! Thou ſpirit of faction! Ye theological wars! how long will ye be let looſe among us? Is it poſſible, that chriſtians, who bear the name of reformed, chriſtians united by the bond of their faith in the belief of the ſame doctrines, and, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, chriſtians united by the very efforts of their enemies to deſtroy them; can they violate, after all, thoſe laws of toleration, which they have ſo often preſcribed to others, and againſt the violation of which they have remonſtrated with ſo much wiſdom and ſucceſs? Can they convoke eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies, can they draw up canons, can they denounce excommunications and anathemas againſt thoſe, who, retaining with themſelves the leading truths of chriſtianity and of the reformation, think differently on points of ſimple ſpeculation, on queſtions purely metaphyſical, and, if I may ſpeak the whole, on matters ſo abſtruſe, that they are alike indeterminable by them, who exclude members from the communion of Jeſus Chriſt, and by thoſe who are excluded? O ye ſons of the reformation! how long will you counteract your own principles! how long will you take pleaſure in increaſing the number of thoſe, who breathe only your deſtruction, and move only to deſtroy you! O ye ſubjects of the ſovereign of the church! how long will you encroach on the rights of your ſovereign, dare to condemn thoſe whom he abſolves, and to reject thoſe whom his generous benevolence tolerates! Who art thou, that judgeſt another man's ſervant?

vant? for none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For, whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's."

What we have said shall suffice for the subject, which occasioned the maxim in the text. The remaining time I devote to the consideration of the general sense of this maxim. It lays before us the condition, the engagements, the inclination, and the felicity of a christian. What is the felicity of a christian, what is his inclination, what are his engagements, what is his condition? They are *not to be his own*; but to say, *whether I live, or die, I am the Lord's*. The whole, that we shall propose to you, is contained in these four articles.

I. The text lays before us the primitive *condition* of a christian. It is a condition of *dependence*. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

None of us *liveth* to himself, *for whether we live, we live unto the Lord*. What do we possess, during our abode upon earth, which doth not absolutely depend on him, who placed us here? Our existence is not ours; our fortune is not ours; our reputation is not ours; our virtue is not ours; our reason is not ours; our health is not ours; our life is not ours.

Our *existence* is not ours. A few years ago we found ourselves in this world, constituting a very inconsiderable part of it. A few years ago the world itself was nothing. The will of God alone hath made a being of this nothing, as he can make this being a nothing, whenever he pleaseth to do so.

Our *fortune* is not ours. The most opulent persons often see their *riches make themselves wings, and fly away*. Houses, the best established, disappear in an instant. We have seen a

Job,

Job, who had poſſeſſed *seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and servants without number*; we have ſeen the man, who had been *the greatest of all the men of the east*, lying on a dunghill, retaining nothing of his proſperity but a ſorrowful remembrance, which aggravated the adverſities that followed it.

Our *reputation* is not ours. One ſingle frailty ſometimes tarniſheth a life of the moſt unſullied beauty. One moment's abſence ſometimes debaſeth the glory of the moſt profound politician, of the moſt expert general, of a ſaint of the higheſt order. A very diminutive fault will ſerve to render contemptible, yea, infamous, the man who committed it; and to make him tremble at the thought of appearing before men, who have no other advantage over him than that of having committed the ſame offence more fortunately; I mean of having concealed the commiſſion of it from the eyes of his fellow-creatures.

Our *virtue* is not ours. Want of opportunity is often the cauſe why one, who openly profeſſeth chriſtianity, is not an apoſtate; another an adulterer; another a murderer.

Our *reason* is not ours. While we poſſeſs it, we are ſubject to diſtractions, to abſence of thought, to ſuſpenſion of intelligence, which render us entirely incapable of reflection; and, what is ſtill more mortifying to human nature, they, whoſe geniuſes are the moſt tranſcendant and ſublime, ſometimes become either melancholy or mad; like Nebuchadnezzar they ſink into beaſts, and browſe like them on the herbage of the field.

Our *health* is not ours. The catalogue of thoſe infirmities which deſtroy it, (I ſpeak of thoſe which we know, and which mankind by a ſtudy of five or ſix thouſand years have diſcovered) makes whole volumes. A catalogue of thoſe

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which are unknown, would probably make larger volumes yet.

Our *life* is not ours. Winds, waves, heat, cold, aliments, vegetables, animals, nature, and each of its component parts, conſpire to deprive us of it. Not one of thoſe, who have entered this church, can demonſtrate that he ſhall go out of it alive. Not one of thoſe, who compoſe this aſſembly, even of the youngeſt and ſtrongeſt, can aſſure himſelf of one year, one day, one hour, one moment of life. *None of us liveth to himſelf;* for, *if we live, we are the Lord's.*

Further, *No man dieth to himſelf. If we die, we are the Lord's.* How abſolute ſoever the dominion of one man over another may be, there is a moment, in which both are on a level; that moment comes when we die. Death delivers a ſlave from the power of a tyrant, under whoſe rigour he hath ſpent his life in groans. Death terminates all the relations, that ſubſiſt between men in this life. But the relation of dependence, which ſubſiſts between the Creator and his creatures, is an eternal relation. That world, into which we enter when we die, is a part of his empire, and is as ſubject to his laws as that into which we entered when we were born. During this life, the Supreme Governor hath riches and poverty, glory and ignominy, cruel tyrants and clement princes, rains and droughts, raging tempeſts and refreſhing breezes, air wholeſome and air infected, famine and plenty, victories and defeats, to render us happy or miſerable. After death, he hath abſolution and condemnation, a tribunal of juſtice and a tribunal of mercy, angels and devils, *a river of pleaſure* and *a lake burning with fire and brimſtone*, hell with its horrors and heaven with its happineſs, to render us happy or miſerable as he pleaſeth.

Theſe reflections are not quite ſufficient to make us feel all our *dependence*. Our vanity is mortified,

mortified, when we remember, that what we enjoy is not ours; but it is ſometimes, as it were, indemnified by obſerving the great means, that God employs to deprive us of our enjoyments. God hath, in general, excluded this extravagant motive to pride. He hath attached our felicity to one fibre, to one caprice, to one grain of ſand, to objects the leaſt likely, and ſeemingly the leaſt capable, of influencing our deſtiny.

On what is your high idea of yourſelf founded? On your genius? And what is neceſſary to reduce the fineſt genius to that ſtate of melancholy or madneſs, of which I juſt now ſpoke? Muſt the earth quake? Muſt the ſea overflow its banks? Muſt the heavens kindle into lightning and reſound in thunder? Muſt the elements claſh, and the powers of nature be ſhaken? No; there needs nothing but the diſplacing of one little fibre in your brain!

On what is your high idea of yourſelf founded? On that ſelf-complacence, which fortune, rank, and pleaſing objects, that ſurround you, ſeem to contribute to excite? And what is neceſſary to diſſipate your ſelf-complacence? Muſt the earth tremble? Muſt the ſea overflow its banks? Muſt heaven arm itſelf with thunder and lightning? Muſt all nature be ſhaken? No; one caprice is ſufficient. An appearance, under which an object preſents itſelf to us, or rather, a colour, that our imagination lends it, baniſheth ſelf-complacence, and, lo! the man juſt now agitated with ſo much joy, is fixed in a black, a deep deſpair!

On what is your lofty idea of yourſelf founded? On your health? But what is neceſſary to deprive you of your health? Earthquakes? Armies? Inundations? Muſt nature return to its chaotic ſtate? No; one grain of ſand is ſufficient! That grain of ſand, which in another poſition was next to nothing to you, and was re-

ally nothing to your felicity, becomes in its present position a punishment, a martyrdom, a hell!

People sometimes speculate the nature of those torments, which divine justice reserves for the wicked. They are less concerned to avoid the pains of hell, than to discover wherein they consist. They ask, what fuel can supply a fire, that will never be extinguished. Vain researches! The principle in my text is sufficient to give me frightful ideas of hell. We are in a state of entire *dependence* on the Supreme Being; and to repeat it again, one single grain of sand, which is nothing in itself, may become in the hands of the Supreme Being, a punishment, a martyrdom, a hell in regard to us. What *dependence!* *Whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's.* This is the primitive *condition* of a christian.

II. Our text points out the *engagements* of a christian. Let us abridge our reflections. Remark the state in which Jesus Christ found us; what he performed to deliver us from it; and under what conditions we enter on and enjoy this deliverance.

1. In what *state* did Jesus Christ find us, when he came into our world? I am sorry to say, the affected delicacy of the world, which increaseth as its irregularities multiply, obligeth me to suppress part of a metaphorical description, that the holy Spirit hath given us in the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel. "Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite," saith he to the church. "When thou wast born, no eye pitied thee, to do any thing unto thee; but thou wast cast out in the open air, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, and I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live. I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I swear unto thee,

thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine," ver. 3, &c.

Let us leave the metaphor, and let us confine our attention to the meaning. When Jeſus Chriſt came into the world, in what ſtate did he find us? Deſcended from a long train of anceſtors in rebellion againſt the laws of God, fluctuating in our ideas, ignorant of our origin and end, blinded by our prejudices, infatuated by our paſſions, *having no hope, and being without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. condemned to die, and reſerved for eternal flames. From this ſtate Jeſus Chriſt delivered us, and brought us into *the glorious liberty of the ſons of God*, Rom. viii. 21. in order to enable us to participate the felicity of the bleſſed God, by making us *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. By a deliverance ſo glorious, doth not the deliverer obtain peculiar rights over us?

Remark, further, on what *conditions* Jeſus Chriſt hath freed you from your miſeries, and you will perceive, that *ye are not your own*. What means the morality that Jeſus Chriſt enjoined in his goſpel? What vows were made for each of you at your baptiſm? What haſt thou promiſed at the Lord's table? In one word, to what authority didſt thou ſubmit by embracing the goſpel? Didſt thou ſay to Jeſus Chriſt, Lord! I will be partly thine, and partly mine own? To thee I will ſubmit the opinions of my mind; but the irregular diſpoſitions of my heart I will reſerve to myſelf. I will conſent to renounce my vengeance; but thou ſhalt allow me to retain my Dalilah and my Druſilla. For thee I will quit the world and diſſipating pleaſures; but thou ſhalt indulge the viſionary and capricious flow of my humour. On a chriſtian feſtival I will riſe into tranſports of devotion; my countenance ſhall emit rays of a divine flame; my eyes ſhall ſparkle with ſeraphic fire, *my heart and my fleſh*,

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ſhall cry out for the living God, Pſal. lxxxiv. 2. but when I return to the world, I will ſink into the ſpirit of the men of it; I will adopt their maxims, ſhare their pleaſures, immerſe myſelf in ther converſation; and thus I will be alternately *cold and hot*, Rev. iii. 15. a chriſtian and a heathen, an angel and a devil. Is this your idea of chriſtianity? Undoubtedly it is that, which many of our hearers have formed; and which they take too much pains to prove, by the whole courſe of their converſation. But this is not the idea which the inſpired writers have given us of chriſtianity; it is not that, which, after their example, we have given you. Him only I acknowledge for a true chriſtian, who is *not his own*, at leaſt, who continually endeavours to eradicate the remains of ſin, that reſiſt the empire of Jeſus Chriſt. Him alone I acknowledge for a true chriſtian, who can ſay with St. Paul, although not in the ſame degree, yet with equal ſincerity, *I am crucified with Chriſt; nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life, which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me*, Gal. ii. 20.

Conſider, thirdly, what it coſt Jeſus Chriſt to deliver you from your wretched ſtate. Could our freedom have been procured by a few emotions of benevolence, or by an act of ſupreme power? In order to deliver us from our *griefs*, it was neceſſary for him to *bear* them; to terminate our *ſorrows*, he muſt *carry* them; (according to the language of a prophet) to deliver us from the ſtrokes of divine juſtice, he muſt be *ſtricken and ſmitten of God*, Iſa. liii. 4. I am aware, that one of the moſt deplorable infirmities of the human mind, is to become inſenſible to the moſt affecting objects by becoming familiar with them. The glorified ſaints, we know, by contemplating the ſufferings of the Saviour of

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the world, behold objects, that excite eternal adorations of the mercy of *him, who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and made them kings, and priests unto God his Father*, Rev. i. 5, 6. but in our present state, the proposing of these objects to us in a course of sermons is sufficient to weary us. However, I affirm, that, if we have not been affected with what Christ hath done for our salvation, it hath not been owing to our thinking too much, but to our not thinking enough, and perhaps to our never having thought of the subject once, with such a profound attention as its interesting nature demands.

Bow thyself towards the mystical ark, christian! and fix thine eyes on the mercy-seat. Revolve in thy meditation the astonishing, I had almost said, the incredible history of thy Saviour's love. Go to Bethlehem, and behold him, *who upholdeth all things by the word of his power*, (I use the language of an apostle) him, who thought it no usurpation of the rights of the Deity to be *equal with God*; behold him *humbling himself*, (I use here the words of St. Paul, Heb. i. 3. Phil. ii. 6. his words are more emphatical still.) Behold him *annihilated**; for, although the child, who was born in a stable, and laid in a manger, was a real being, yet he may seem to be *annihilated* in regard to the degrading circumstances, which veiled and concealed his natural dignity; behold him *annihilated*, by *taking upon him the form of a servant*. Follow him through the whole course of his life; *he went about doing good*, Acts x. 38. and exposed himself in every place to inconveniences and miseries, through the abundance of his benevolence and love. Pass to Gethsemane; behold his agony; see him as

* Videtur hic alludere ad Dan. ix. 26. Ubi dicitur Messias extinguendus, ut ei nihil superfit, i. e. quasi in nihilum sit redigendus. *Poli Synops.* in loc.

the Redeemer of mankind contending with the Judge of the whole earth; in an agony, in which Jesus resisted with only *prayers and supplications, strong crying and tears*, Heb. v. 7. an agony preparatory to an event still more terrible, the bare idea of which terrified and troubled him, made *his sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground*, Luke xxii. 44. and produced this prayer so fruitful in controversies in the schools, and so penetrating and affecting; so fruitful in motives to obedience, devotion, and gratitude, in truly christian hearts, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*, Matt. xxvi. 44. Go further yet, christian! and after thou hast seen all the sufferings, which Jesus Christ endured in going from the garden to the cross, ascend Calvary with him; stop on the summit of the hill, and on that theatre behold the most astonishing of all the works of Almighty God. See this Jesus, *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. see him stripped, fastened to an accursed tree, confounded with two thieves, nailed to the wood, surrounded with executioners and tormentors, having lost, during this dreadful period, that sight of the comfortable presence of his Father, which constituted all his joy, and being driven to exclaim, *My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?* Matt. xxvii. 40. But behold him, amidst all these painful sufferings, firmly supporting his patience by his love, resolutely enduring all these punishments, from those motives of benevolence, which first engaged him to submit to them, ever occupied with the prospect of saving those poor mortals, for whose sake he descended into this world, fixing his eyes on that world of believers, which his cross would subdue to his government, according to his own saying, *I, if I be lifted up from earth, will draw*

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all men unto me, John xii. 32. Can we help feeling the force of that motive, which the ſcripture propoſeth in ſo many places, and ſo very emphatically in theſe words, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, 2 Cor. v. 14. that is to ſay, engageth and attacheth us cloſely to him; *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they, which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again.* Yea, *The love of Chriſt forceth us*, when we think what he hath done for us.

III. My third article, which ſhould treat of the *inclination* of a chriſtian, is naturally contained in the ſecond, that is, in that which treats of his *engagements*. To devote ourſelves to a maſter, who hath carried his love to us ſo far; to devote ourſelves to him by fear and force; to ſubmit to his laws, becauſe he hath the power of precipitating thoſe into hell, who have the audacity to break them; to obey him on this principle only, this is a diſpoſition of mind as deteſtable as diſobedience itſelf, as hateful as open rebellion. The ſame arguments, which prove that a chriſtian is *not his own* by engagement, prove that he is *not his own* by inclination. When, therefore, we ſhall have proved that this ſtate is *his felicity* alſo, we ſhall have finiſhed the plan of this diſcourſe.

IV. Can it be difficult to perſuade you on this article? Stretch your imaginations. Find, if you can, any circumſtance in life, in which it would be happier to reject chriſtianity than to ſubmit to it.

Amidſt all the diſorders and confuſions, and (ſo to ſpeak) amidſt the univerſal chaos of the preſent world, it is delightful to belong to the Governor, who firſt formed the world, and who hath aſſured us, that he will diſplay the ſame

power.

power in renewing it, which he displayed in creating it.

In the calamities of life, it is delightful to belong to the Master, who distributes them; who distributes them only for our good; who knows afflictions by experience; whose love inclines him to terminate our sufferings; and who continues them from the same principle of love, that inclines him to terminate them, when we shall have derived those advantages from them, for which they were sent.

During the persecutions of the church, it is delightful to belong to a Guardian, who can curb our persecutors, and controul every tyrant; who useth them for the execution of his own counsels; and who will break them in pieces with a rod of iron, when they can no longer contribute to the sanctifying of his servants.

Under a sense of our infirmities; when we are terrified with the purity of that morality, the equity of which we are obliged to own, even while we tremble at its severity; it is delightful to belong to a Judge, who doth not exact his rights with the utmost rigour; who *knoweth our frame*, Psal. ciii. 14. who pitieth our infirmities; and who assureth us, that *he will not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax*, Matt. xii. 20.

When our passions are intoxicated, in those fatal moments, in which the desire of possessing the objects of our passions wholly occupies our hearts, and we consider them as our paradise, our gods; it is delightful, however incapable we may be of attending to it, to belong to a Lord who restrains and controuls us, because he loves us; and who refuseth to grant us what we so eagerly desire, because he would either preclude those terrible regrets, which penitents feel after the commission of great sins, or those more terrible torments, that are inseparable from final impenitence.

Under

Under a recollection of our rebellions, it is delightful to belong to a Parent, who will receive us favourably when we implore his clemency; who ſweetens the bitterneſs of our remorſe; who is touched with our regrets; who wipes away the tears, that the remembrance of our backſlidings makes us ſhed; who *ſpareth us, as a man ſpareth his own ſon, that ſerveth him,* Mal. iii. 17.

In that empty void, into which we are often conducted, while we ſeem to enjoy the moſt ſolid eſtabliſhments, the moſt exquiſite pleaſures, and the moſt brilliant honours, it is delightful to belong to a Patron, who reſerves for us objects far better ſuited to our original excellence, and to the immenſity of our deſires. *To live to Jeſus Chriſt* then, is the *felicity* of a chriſtian.

But, if it be a felicity to belong to Jeſus Chriſt while we *live*, it is a felicity incomparably greater to belong to him when we *die*. We will conclude this meditation with this article; and it is an article, that I would endeavour above all others to impreſs on your hearts, and to engage you to take home to your houſes. But, unhappily, the ſubject of this article is one of thoſe, which generally make the leaſt impreſſions on the minds of chriſtians. I know a great many chriſtians, who place their happineſs in *living to Jeſus Chriſt;* but how few have love enough for him to eſteem it a felicity to *die to him!* Not only is the number of thoſe ſmall, who experience ſuch a degree of love to Chriſt; there are very few, who even comprehend what we mean on this ſubject. Some efforts of divine love reſemble very accurate and refined reaſonings. They ought naturally to be the moſt intelligible to intelligent creatures, and they are generally the leaſt underſtood. Few people are capable of that attention, which takes the mind from every thing foreign from the object in contemplation, and

fixeth

fixeth it not only on the ſubject, but alſo on that part, on that point of it, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, which is to be inveſtigated and explained; ſo that, by a frailty which mankind cannot ſufficiently deplore, preciſion confuſeth our ideas, and light itſelf makes a ſubject dark. In like manner, there are ſome efforts of divine love, ſo detached from ſenſe, ſo free from all ſenſible objects, ſo ſuperior to even all the means, that religion uſeth to attract us to God, ſo eagerly aſpiring after an union more cloſe, more noble, and more tender, that the greateſt part of chriſtians, as I ſaid before, are not only incapable of experiencing them, but they are alſo hard to be perſuaded that there is any reality in what they have been told about them.

To be Jeſus Chriſt's in the hour of death by *condition*, by *engagement*, and above all by *inclination*, is the only means of dying with delight. Without theſe, whatever makes our felicity while we live, will become our puniſhment when we die; whether it be a criminal object, or an innocent object, or even an object which God himſelf commandeth us to love.

Criminal objects will puniſh you. They will repreſent death to you as the meſſenger of an avenging God, who comes to drag you before a tribunal, where the Judge will examine and puniſh all your crimes. *Lawful* objects will diſtreſs you. Pleaſant fields! convenient houſes! we muſt forſake you. Natural relations! agreeable companions! faithful friends! we muſt give you up. From you, our dear children! who kindle in our hearts a kind of love, that agitates and inflames beings, when nature ſeems to render them incapable of heat and motion, we muſt be torn from you.

Religious objects, which we are commanded above all others to love, will contribute to our anguiſh in a dying bed, if they have confined our love,

love, and rendered us too ſenſible to that kind of happineſs which piety procures in this world; and if they have prevented our ſouls from riſing into a contemplation of that bleſſed ſtate, in which there will be no more temple, no more ſacraments, no more groſs and ſenſible worſhip. The man, who is too much attached to theſe things, is confounded at the hour of death. The land of love, to which he goes, is an unknown country to him; and as the borders of it, on which he ſtands, and on which alone his eyes are fixed, preſent only precipices to his view, fear and trembling ſurround his every ſtep.

But a believer, who loves Jeſus Chriſt with that kind of love, which made St. Paul exclaim, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, 2 Cor. v. 14. finds himſelf on the ſummit of his wiſhes at the approach of death. This believer, living in this world, reſembles the ſon of a great king, whom ſome ſad event tore from his royal parent in his cradle; who knows his parent only by the fame of his virtues; who has always a difficult, and often an intercepted correſpondence with his parent; whoſe remittances, and favours from his parent, are always diminiſhed by the hands through which they come to him. With what tranſport would ſuch a ſon meet the moment appointed by his father for his return to his natural ſtate!

I belong to God, (theſe are the ſentiments of the believer, of whom I am ſpeaking) I belong to God, not only by his ſovereign dominion over me as a creature; not only by that right, which as a maſter, who hath redeemed his ſlave, he hath acquired over me; but I belong to God, becauſe I love him, and becauſe, I know, God alone deſerves my higheſt eſteem. The deep impreſſions, that his adorable perfections have made on my mind, make me impatient with every object, which intercepts my ſight of him. I could not

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be content to abide any longer in this world, were he not to ordain my ſtay; and were I not to conſider his will as the only law of my conduct. But the law, that commands me to live, doth not forbid me to deſire to die. I conſider death as the period fixed for the gratifying of my moſt ardent wiſhes, the conſummation of my higheſt joy. "Whilſt I am at home in the body, I am abſent from the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 6. But it would be incomparably more delightful *to be abſent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*, ver. 8. And what can detain me on earth, when God ſhall condeſcend to call me to himſelf?

Not ye *criminal* objects! you I never loved; and although I have ſometimes ſuffered myſelf to be ſeduced by your deceitful appearances of pleaſure, yet I have been ſo ſeverely puniſhed by the tears that you have cauſed me to ſhed, and by the remorſe which you have occaſioned my conſcience to feel, that there is no reaſon to fear my putting you into the plan of my felicity.

Nor ſhall ye detain me, *lawful* objects! How ſtrong ſoever the attachments, that unite me to you, may be, you are only ſtreams of happineſs, and I am going to the fountain of felicity. You are only emanations of happineſs, and I am going to *the happy God.*

Neither ſhall ye, *religious* objects! detain me. You are only means, and death is going to conduct me to the end; you are only the road, to die is to arrive at home. True, I ſhall no more read thoſe excellent works, in which authors of the brighteſt genius have raiſed the truth from depths of darkneſs and prejudice, in which it had been buried, and placed it in the moſt lively point of view. I ſhall hear no more of thoſe ſermons, in which the preacher, animated by the holy ſpirit of God, attempts to elevate me above the preſent world. But I ſhall hear and contemplate

eternal

eternal wiſdom, and I ſhall diſcover in my commerce with it the views, the deſigns, the plans of my Creator; and I ſhall acquire more wiſdom in one moment by this mean, than I ſhould ever obtain by hearing the beſt compoſed ſermons, and by reading the beſt written books. True, I ſhall no more devote myſelf to you, cloſet exerciſes! holy meditations! aſpirings of a ſoul in ſearch of its God! crying, *Lord, I beseech thee shew me thy glory!* Exod. xxxiii. 18. Lord, diſſipate the dark thick cloud that conceals thee from my ſight! ſuffer me to approach that light, which hath hitherto been inacceſſible to me! But death is the diſſipation of clouds and darkneſs; it is an approach to perfect light; it takes me from my cloſet, and preſents me like a ſeraph at the foot of the throne of God and the Lamb.

True, I ſhall no more partake of you, ye holy ordinances of religion! ye ſacred ceremonies! that have conveyed ſo many conſolations into my ſoul; that have ſo amply afforded ſolidity and ſolace to the ties, which united my heart to my God; that have ſo often procured me a heaven on earth; but I quit you becauſe I am going to receive immediate effuſions of divine love, pleaſures at God's right hand for evermore, *fullness of joy in his presence*, Pſal. xvi. 11. I quit you becauſe . . . . . .

Alas! your hearts perhaps have eſcaped me, my brethren! perhaps theſe emotions, ſuperior to your piety, are no longer the ſubject of your attention. I have, however, no other direction to give you, than that which may ſtand for an abridgement of this diſcourſe, of all my other preaching, and of my whole miniſtry; Love God; be the Lord's by *inclination*, as you are his by *condition*, and by *engagement*. Then, the miſeries of this life will be tolerable, and the approach of death delightful. God grant his bleſſing on the word! To him be honour and glory for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON IV.

THE EQUALITY OF MANKIND.

PROVERBS xxii. 2.

The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.

AMONG the various diſpenſations of providence, which regard mankind, one of the moſt advantageous in the original deſign of the Creator, and at the ſame time one of the moſt fatal through our abuſe of it, is the diverſity of our conditions. How could men have formed one ſocial body, if all conditions had been equal? Had all poſſeſſed the ſame rank, the ſame opulence, the ſame power, how could they have relieved one another from the inconveniences, which would have continually attended each of them: Variety of conditions renders men neceſſary to each other. The governor is neceſſary to the people, the people are neceſſary to the governor; wiſe ſtateſmen are neceſſary to a powerful ſoldiery, a powerful ſoldiery is neceſſary to wiſe ſtateſmen. A ſenſe of this neceſſity is the ſtrongeſt bond of union, and this it is, which inclines one to aſſiſt another in hopes of receiving aſſiſtance in his turn.

But if this diverſity be connected with the higheſt utility to mankind in the original deſign of the Creator, it is become, we muſt allow, productive of fatal evils through our abuſe of it. On the one hand, they, whoſe condition is the moſt brilliant, are dazzled with their own brightneſs; they ſtudy the articles, which elevate them above their fellow creatures, and they chooſe to be ignorant of every thing, that puts themſelves on a level with them; they perſuade themſelves, that

that they are beings incomparable, far more noble and excellent than thoſe vile mortals, on whom they proudly tread, and on whom they ſcarcely deign to caſt a haughty eye. Hence provoking arrogance, cruel reſerve, and hence tyranny and deſpotiſm. On the other hand, they, who are placed in inferior ſtations, proſtrate their imaginations before theſe beings, whom they treat rather as gods than men; them they conſtitute arbiters of right and wrong, true and falſe; they forget, while they reſpect the rank which the Supreme Governor of the world hath given to their ſuperiors, to maintain a ſenſe of their own dignity. Hence come ſoft compliances, baſe ſubmiſſions of reaſon and conſcience, ſlavery the moſt willing and abject, to the high demands of theſe phantoms of grandeur, theſe imaginary gods.

To rectify theſe different ideas, to humble the one claſs, and to exalt the other, it is neceſſary to ſhew men in their true point of view; to convince them that diverſity of condition, which God hath been pleaſed to eſtabliſh among them, is perfectly conſiſtent with equality; that the ſplendid condition of the firſt, includes nothing that favours their ideas of ſelf-preference; and that there is nothing in the low condition of the laſt, which deprives them of their real dignity, or debaſes their intelligences formed in the image of God. I deſign to diſcuſs this ſubject to-day. The men, who compoſe this audience, and among whom providence hath very unequally divided the bleſſings of this life; princes, who command, and to whom God himſelf hath given authority to command ſubjects; ſubjects, who obey, and on whom God hath impoſed obedience as a duty; the rich, who give alms, and the poor who receive them; all, all my hearers, I am going to reduce to their natural equality, and to conſider *this equality* as a ſource of piety. This is the

meaning

meaning of the wiſe man in the words of the text, "The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all."

Let us enter into the matter. We ſuppoſe two truths, and do not attempt to prove them. Firſt, that, although the wiſe man mentions here only two different ſtates, yet he includes all. Under the general notion of *rich* and *poor*, we think, he comprehends every thing, that makes any ſenſible difference in the conditions of mankind. Accordingly, it is an inconteſtible truth, that what he ſays of the *rich and poor* may be ſaid of the nobleman and plebeian, of the maſter and the ſervant. It may be ſaid, the maſter and the ſervant, the nobleman and the plebeian, *meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all*: and ſo of the reſt.

It is not unlikely, however, that Solomon, when he ſpoke of *the rich and poor*, had a particular deſign in chooſing this kind of diverſity of condition to illuſtrate his meaning in preference to every other. Although I can hardly conceive, that there ever was a period of time, in which the love of riches did faſcinate the eyes of mankind, as it does in this age; yet it is very credible, that in Solomon's time, as in ours, riches made the grand difference among men. Strictly ſpeaking, there are now only two conditions of mankind, that of the rich and that of the poor. Riches decide all, yea thoſe qualities, which ſeem to have no concern with them, I mean, mental qualifications. Find but the art of amaſſing money, and you will thereby find that of uniting in your own perſon all the advantages of which mankind have entertained the higheſt ideas. How mean ſoever your birth may have been, you will poſſeſs the art of concealing it, and you may form an alliance with the moſt illuſtrious families; how ſmall ſoever your knowledge may be, you may paſs for a ſuperior genius,

capable of deciding queſtions the moſt intricate, points the moſt abſtruſe; and, what is ſtill more deplorable, you may purchaſe with ſilver and gold a kind of honour and virtue, while you remain the moſt abandoned of mankind, at leaſt, your money will attract that reſpect, which is due to nothing but honour and virtue.

The ſecond truth which we ſuppoſe, is, that this propoſition, *the Lord is the maker of them all*, is one of thoſe conciſe, I had almoſt ſaid one of thoſe defective propoſitions, which a judicious auditor ought to fill up, in order to give it a proper meaning. The ſtyle is very common in our ſcriptures; it is peculiarly proper in ſententious works, ſuch as this, out of which we have taken the text. The deſign of Solomon is to teach us, that whatever diverſities of conditions there may be in ſociety, the men, who compoſe it, are *eſſentially equal*. The reaſon that he aſſigns, is, *the Lord is the maker of them all*. If this idea be not added, the propoſition proves nothing at all. It does not follow, becauſe the ſame God is the *creator* of two beings, that there is any reſemblance between them, much leſs that they are equal. Is not God the creator of pure unembodied intelligences, who have faculties ſuperior to thoſe of mankind? Is not God the author of their exiſtence as well as of ours? Becauſe *God is the creator of both*, does it follow that both are equal? God is no leſs the creator of the organs of an ant, than he is the creator of the ſublime geniuſes of a part of mankind. Becauſe God hath created an ant and a ſublime genius, does it follow, that theſe two beings are equal? The meaning of the words of Solomon depends then on what a prudent reader ſupplies. We may judge what ought to be ſupplied by the nature of the ſubject, and by a parallel paſſage in the book of Job. "Did not he, that made *me in the* womb, make my ſervant? and did he

not

not faſhion us alike*?" chap. xxxi. 15. To the words of our text, therefore, *the Lord is the maker of them all*, we muſt add, *the Lord hath faſhioned them all alike.* Nothing but groſs ignorance, or wild treachery, can incline an expoſitor to abuſe this liberty of making up the ſenſe of a paſſage, and induce him to conclude, that he may add to a text whatever may ſeem to him the moſt proper to ſupport a favourite opinion, or to cover an unworthy paſſion. When we are inquiſitive for truth, it is eaſy to diſcover the paſſages of holy ſcripture, in which the authors have made uſe of theſe conciſe imperfect ſentences.

Of this kind are all paſſages, which excite no diſtinct ideas, or which excite ideas foreign from the ſcope of the writer, unleſs the meaning be ſupplied. For example, we read theſe words in the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's ſecond epiſtle to the Corinthians, ver. 4. "If he, that cometh, preacheth another Jeſus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another ſpirit, which ye have not received, or another goſpel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." If we attach ſuch ideas to theſe words, as they ſeem at firſt to excite, we ſhall take them in a ſenſe quite oppoſite to the meaning of St. Paul. The apoſtle aimed to make the Corinthians reſpect his miniſtry, and to conſider his apoſtleſhip as confirmed of God in a manner as clear and deciſive as that of any miniſter, who had preached to them. Is the propoſition, that we have read, any thing to this purpoſe, unleſs we ſupply what is not expreſſed? But if we ſupply what

* This reading of the French bible differs a little from our tranſlation; but a compariſon of the two tranſlations with the original, and with the ſcope of the place, will give the preference to the French reading. *Nonne diſpoſuit nos in utero unus atque idem?* Vide *Poli Synops.* in loc.

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what is underſtood, and add theſe words, *but this is incredible*, or any others equivalent, we ſhall perceive the force of his reaſoning, which is this: If there hath been among you any one, whoſe preaching have revealed a Redeemer, better adapted to your wants than he, whom we have preached to you, or if you have received more excellent gifts than thoſe, which the holy Spirit ſo abundantly diffuſed among you by our miniſtry, you might indeed have preferred him before us; but it is not credible, that you have had ſuch teachers: you ought then to reſpect our miniſtry.

We need not make any more remarks of this kind; our text, it is eaſy to ſee, ought to be claſſed with them, that are imperfect, and muſt be ſupplied with words to make up the ſenſe. *The rich and the poor meet together* in four articles of equality; becauſe *the Lord hath made them all* EQUAL in *nature* or in *eſſence*, equal in *privileges*, equal in *appointment*, equal in their *laſt end*. The Lord hath made them equal in *nature*; they have the ſame faculties, and the ſame infirmities: Equal in *privileges*; for both are capable by the excellence of their nature, and more ſtill by that of their religion, to form the nobleſt deſigns: Equal in *deſignation*; for although the rich differ from the poor in their condition, yet both are intended to anſwer the great purpoſes of God with regard to human nature: Finally, they are equal in their *laſt end*; the ſame ſentence of death is paſſed on both, and both alike muſt ſubmit to it. "The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all." Thus the text affords us four truths worthy of our moſt ſerious attention.

The firſt article of equality, in which men *meet together*, is an equality of *eſſence* or of *nature*; the Lord hath made them all with the ſame faculties, and with the ſame infirmities.

1. With

1. With the ſame *faculties.* What is man? He conſiſts of a body, and of a ſoul united to a body. This definition, or rather, if you will, this deſcription, agrees to all mankind, to the great as well as to the ſmall, to the rich as well as to the poor. The ſoul of the poor hath the ſame power as that of the rich, and to lay down principles, to infer conſequences, to diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood, to chooſe good or evil, or examine what is moſt advantageous and moſt glorious to it. The body of the poor, as well as that of the rich, diſplays the wiſdom of him, who formed it; it hath a ſymmetry in its parts, an exactneſs in its motions, and a proportion to its ſecret ſprings. The laws, that unite the body of the poor to his ſoul, are the ſame as thoſe, which unite theſe two beings in the rich; there is the ſame connexion between the two parts, that conſtitute the eſſence of the man; a ſimilar motion of the body produceth a ſimilar thought in the mind; a ſimilar idea of the mind, or a ſimilar emotion of the heart, produceth a ſimilar motion of the body. This is man. Theſe are the faculties of men. Diverſity of condition makes no alteration in theſe faculties.

2. *The Lord hath made them all* with the ſame *infirmities.* They have the ſame infirmities of body. The body of the rich, as well as that of the poor, is a common receptacle, where a thouſand impurities meet; it is a general rendezvous of pains and ſickneſſes; it is *a houſe of clay, whoſe foundation is in the duſt, and is cruſhed before the moth*, Job iv. 19.

They have the ſame mental infirmities. The mind of the rich, like that of the poor, is incapable of ſatisfying itſelf on a thouſand deſirable queſtions. The mind of the rich, as well as that of the poor, is prevented by its natural ignorance, when it would expand itſelf in contemplation, and eclairciſe a number of obvious phœnomena.

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The ſoul of the rich, like that of the poor, is ſubject to doubt, uncertainty, and ignorance; and, what is more mortifying ſtill, the heart of the rich, like the poor man's heart, is ſubject to the ſame paſſions, to envy, and to anger, and to all the diſorder of ſin.

They have the ſame frailties in the laws, that unite the ſoul to the body. The ſoul of the rich, like the ſoul of the poor, is united to a body, or rather enſlaved by it. The ſoul of the rich, like that of the poor, is interrupted in its moſt profound meditations by a ſingle ray of light, by the buzzing of a fly, or by the touch of an atom of duſt. The rich man's faculties of reaſoning and of ſelf-determining are ſuſpended, and in ſome ſort vaniſhed and abſorbed, like thoſe of the poor, on the ſlighteſt alteration of the ſenſes; and this alteration of the ſenſes happens to him, as well as to the poor, at the approach of certain objects. David's reaſon is ſuſpended at the ſight of Bathſheba; David no longer diſtinguiſheth good from evil; David forgets the purity of the laws, which he himſelf had ſo highly celebrated; and, at the ſight of this object, his whole ſyſtem of piety is refuted, his whole edifice of religion ſinks and diſappears.

The ſecond point of equality, in which *the rich and the poor meet together*, is an equality of *privileges*. To aſpire at certain eminences, when providence hath placed us in inferior ſtations in ſociety, is egregious folly. If a man, who hath only ordinary talents, only a common genius, pretend to acquire an immortal reputation among heroes, and to fill the world with his name and exploits, he acts fancifully and wildly. If he, who was born a ſubject, raſhly and ambitiouſly attempt to aſcend the tribunal of a magiſtrate, or the throne of a king, and to aim at governing, when he is called to obey, he is guilty of rebellion. But this law, which forbids inferiors to arrogate

rogate to themſelves ſome privileges, doth not prohibit them from aſpiring at others, incomparably more great and glorious.

Let us diſcover, if it be poſſible, the moſt miſerable man in this aſſembly; let us diſſipate the darkneſs that covers him; let us raiſe him from that kind of grave, in which his indigence and meanneſs conceal him. This man, unknown to the reſt of mankind; this man, who ſeems hardly formed by the Creator into an intelligent exiſtence; this man hath, however, the greateſt and moſt glorious privileges. This man, being reconciled to God by religion, hath a right to aſpire to the moſt noble and ſublime objects of it. He hath a right to elevate his ſoul to God in ardent prayer; and, without the hazard of being taxed with vanity, he may aſſure himſelf, that God, the Great God, encircled in glory, and ſurrounded with the praiſes of the bleſſed, will behold him, hear his prayer, and grant his requeſt. This man hath a right to ſay to himſelf, The attention, that the Lord of nature gives to the government of the univerſe, to the wants of mankind, to the innumerable company of angels, and to his own felicity, doth not prevent this adorable Being from attending to me; from occupying himſelf about my perſon, my children, my family, my houſe, my health, my ſubſtance, my ſalvation, my moſt minute concern, even a ſingle *hair of my head*, Luke xxi. 18. This man hath a right of addreſſing God by names the moſt tender and mild, yea, if I may venture to ſpeak ſo, by thoſe moſt familiar names, which equals give each other; he may call him his God, his maſter, his father, his friend. Believers have addreſſed God by each of theſe names, and God hath not only permitted them to do ſo, he hath even expreſſed his approbation of their taking theſe names in their mouths. This man hath a right of coming to eat with God at the Lord's table,

table, and to live, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, to live with God, as a man lives with his friend. This man hath a right to apply to himſelf whatever is moſt great, moſt comfortable, moſt extatic in the myſteries of redemption, and to ſay to himſelf, For me the divine Intelligence revolved the plan of redemption; for me the Son of God was appointed, before the foundation of the world, to be a propitiatory ſacrifice; for me in the fulneſs of time he took mortal fleſh; for me he lived ſeveral years among men in this world; for me he pledged himſelf to the juſtice of his Father, and ſuffered ſuch unparalleled puniſhment, as confounds reaſon and ſurpaſſes imagination; for me the holy Spirit *ſhook the heavens and the earth, and the ſea and the dry land*, Hag. ii. 6. and eſtabliſhed a miniſtry, which he confirmed by healing the ſick, by raiſing the dead, by caſting out devils, and by ſubverting the whole order of nature. This man hath a right to aſpire to the felicity of the immortal God, to the glory of the immortal God, to the throne of the immortal God. Arrived at the fatal hour, lying on his dying bed, reduced to the ſight of uſeleſs friends, ineffectual remedies, unavailing tears, he hath a right to triumph over death, and to defy his diſturbing in the ſmalleſt degree the tranquil calm, that his ſoul enjoys; he hath a right to ſummon the gates of heaven to admit his ſoul, and to ſay to them, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates! even lift them up, ye everlaſting doors!*

These are the inconteſtible privileges of the man, who appears to us ſo contemptible. I aſk, my brethren, have the nobles of the earth any privileges more than theſe? Do the train of attendants, which follows them, the horſes, that draw them, the grandees, who ſurround them, the ſuperb titles, which command exterior homage, give them any real ſuperiority over the man,

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who enjoys thoſe privileges, which we have briefly enumerated? Ah! my brethren, nothing proves the littleneſs of great men more than the impreſſion, which the exterior advantages, that diſtinguiſh them from the reſt of mankind, make on their minds. Are you aware of what you are doing, when you deſpiſe them whom providence placeth for a few years in a ſituation inferior to your own? You are deſpiſing and degrading yourſelves, you are renouncing your real greatneſs, and, by valuing yourſelves for a kind of foreign glory, you diſcover a contempt for that, which conſtitutes the real dignity of your nature. The glory of man does not conſiſt in his being a maſter, or a rich man, a nobleman, or a king; it conſiſts in his being a man, in his being formed in the image of his Creator, and capable of all the elevation, that we have been deſcribing. If you condemn your inferiors in ſociety, you plainly declare, that you are inſenſible to your real dignity; for, had you derived your ideas of real greatneſs from their true ſource, you would have reſpected it in perſons, who appear the moſt mean and deſpicable. *The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord hath* endowed *them all* with the ſame privileges. They all *meet together* on the ſame line of equality in regard to their claims of privileges. This was the point to be proved.

We add, in the third place, *the rich and the poor meet together* in an equality of *deſtination*. Rich and poor are placed by providence in different ranks, I grant; but their different ſtations are fixed with the ſame deſign, I mean, to accompliſh the purpoſes of God in regard to men.

What are the deſigns of God in regard to men? What end doth he propoſe to effect by placing us on this planet, thirty, forty, or ſixty years, before he declares our eternal ſtate? We have frequently anſwered this important queſtion. God hath placed us here in a ſtate of probation:

he hath ſet before our eyes ſupreme felicity and intolerable miſery; he hath pointed out the vices, that conduct to the laſt, and the virtues neceſſary to arrive at the firſt; and he hath declared, that our conduct ſhall determine our future fate. This, I think, is the deſign of God in regard to men. This is the notion, that we ought to form, of the end which God propoſes in fixing us a few years upon earth, and in placing us among our fellow creatures in ſociety.

On this principle, which is the moſt glorious condition? It is neither that, which elevates us higheſt in ſociety, nor that, which procureth us the greateſt conveniences of life. If it be not abſolutely indifferent to men, to whom it is uncertain whether they ſhall quit the preſent world the next moment, or continue almoſt a century in it; I ſay, if it be not abſolutely indifferent to them, whether they be high or low, rich or poor, it would be contrary to all the laws of prudence, were they to determine their choice of a condition by conſiderations of this kind alone. A creature capable of eternal felicity, ought to conſider that the moſt glorious condition, which is the moſt likely to procure him the eternal felicity, of which he is capable. Were a wiſe man to chooſe a condition, he would certainly prefer that, in which he could do moſt good; he would always conſider that as the moſt glorious ſtation for himſelf, in which he could beſt anſwer the great end, for which his Creator placed him in this world. It is glorious to be at the head of a nation; but if I could do more good in a mean ſtation, than I could do in an eminent poſt, the meaneſt ſtation would be far more glorious to me than the moſt eminent poſt. Why? becauſe that is moſt glorious to me, which beſt anſwers the end that my Creator propoſed in placing me in this world. God placed me in this world to enable me to do good, and prepare myſelf by a holy

life

life for a happy eternity. To do good at the head of a nation, certain talents are neceſſary. If I have not theſe talents, not only I ſhould not do good in this poſt, but I ſhould certainly do evil. I ſhould expoſe my country to danger; I ſhould ſink its credit, obſcure its glory, and debaſe its dignity. It is, therefore, incomparably leſs glorious for me to be at the head of a ſtate, than to occupy a poſt leſs eminent. It is glorious to fill the higheſt office in the church, to announce the oracles of God, to develope the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, and to direct wandering ſouls to the road that leads to the ſovereign good; but if I be deſtitute of gifts eſſential to the filling of this office, it is incomparably more glorious to me to remain a pupil than to commence a tutor. Why? becauſe that ſtation is the moſt eligible to me, which beſt empowers me to anſwer the end for which my Creator placed me in this world. My Creator placed me in this world, that I might do good, and that by a holy life I might prepare for a happy eternity. In order to do good in the higheſt offices in the church, great talents are neceſſary. If God hath not beſtowed great talents on me, I ſhould not only not do good, but I ſhould do harm. Inſtead of announcing the oracles of God, I ſhould preach the traditions of men; I ſhould involve the myſteries of religion in darkneſs, inſtead of developing them; I ſhould plunge poor mortals into an abyſs of miſery, inſtead of pointing out the road which would conduct them to a bleſſed immortality. But by remaining in the ſtate of a diſciple, I may obtain attention, docility, and a love to truth, which are the virtues of my condition. It is more glorious to be a good ſubject than a bad king; it is more glorious to be a good diſciple than a bad teacher.

But moſt men have falſe ideas of glory, and we form our notions of it from the opinions of theſe unjuſt

unjuſt appraiſers of men and things. That, which elevates us in their eyes, ſeems glorious to us; and we eſteem that contemptible, which abaſeth us before them. We diſcover, I know not what, meanneſs in mechanical employments, and the contempt that we have for the employment extends itſelf to him who follows it, and thus we habituate ourſelves to deſpiſe them whom God honours. Let us undeceive ourſelves, my brethren; there is no condition ſhameful, except it neceſſarily lead us to ſome infraction of the laws of our Supreme *Lawgiver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy*, James iv. 12. Strictly ſpeaking, one condition of life is no more honourable than another. There are, I grant, ſome ſtations, in which the objects, that employ thoſe who fill them, are naturally more noble than thoſe of other ſtations. The condition of a magiſtrate, whoſe employment is to improve and to enforce maxims of government, hath a nobler object than that of a mechanic, whoſe buſineſs it is to improve the leaſt neceſſary art. There is a nobler object in the ſtation of a paſtor called to publiſh the laws of religion, than in that of a ſchoolmaſter confined to teach the letters of the alphabet. But God will regulate our eternal ſtate not according to the object of our purſuit, but according to the manner in which we ſhould have purſued it. In this point of light, all ranks are equal, every condition is the ſame. Mankind have, then, an equality of *deſtination*. The rich and the poor are placed in different ranks with the ſame view, both are to anſwer the great end, that God hath propoſed to anſwer by creating and arranging mankind.

Hitherto we have had occaſion for ſome little labour to prove our theſis, that all men are equal, notwithſtanding the various conditions in which God hath placed them. And you, my brethren, *have had* occaſion for ſome docility to feel the

force

force of our arguments. But in our fourth article, the truth will eſtabliſh itſelf, and its force will be felt by a recital, yea by a hint of our arguments.

We ſaid, fourthly, that men are equal in their *laſt end*, that the ſame ſentence of death is denounced on all, and that they muſt all alike ſubmit to their fate. On which ſide can we view death, and not receive abundant evidence of this truth? Conſider the certainty of death, the nearneſs of death, the harbingers of death, the ravages of death, ſo many ſides by which death may be conſidered, ſo many proofs, ſo many demonſtrations, ſo many ſources of demonſtrations of the truth of this ſenſe of my text, *the rich and poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them all.*

1. Remark the *certainty* of death. "Duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return," Gen. iii. 19. "It is appointed unto men once to die," Heb. ix. 27. The ſentence is univerſal, its univerſality involves all the poſterity of Adam; it includes all conditions, all profeſſions, all ſtations, and every ſtep of life enſures the execution of it.

Whither art thou going, rich man! thou, who congratulateſt thyſelf becauſe thy *fields bring forth plentifully*, and who ſayeſt to thy ſoul, *Soul! thou haſt much goods laid up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry?* To death. Whither art thou going, poor man! thou, who art toiling through a languiſhing life, who beggeſt thy bread from door to door, who art continually perplexed in finding out means of procuring bread to eat and raiment to put on, always an object of the charity of ſome, and of the hardheartedneſs of others? To death. Whither goeſt thou, nobleman! thou, who deckeſt thyſelf with borrowed plumes, who putteſt the renown of thine anceſtors into the liſt of thy virtues, and who think'eſt thyſelf formed of

an earth more refined than that of the reſt of mankind? To death. Whither goeſt thou, peaſant! thou, who derideſt the folly of a peer, and at the ſame time valueſt thyſelf on ſomething equally abſurd? To death. Whither, ſoldier! art thou marching; thou, who talkeſt of nothing but glory and heroiſm, and who amidſt many voices ſounding in thine ears, and inceſſantly crying, *Remember thou art mortal*, art dreaming of, I know not what, immortality? To death. Whither art thou going, merchant! thou, who breatheſt nothing but the increaſe of thy fortune, and who judgeſt of the happineſs or miſery of thy days, not by thine acquiſition of knowledge and thy practice of virtue, but by the gain or the loſs of thy wealth? To death. Whither are we all going, my dear hearers? To death. Do I exceed the truth, my brethren? Does death regard titles, dignities, and riches? Where is Alexander? Where is Cæſar? Where are all they, whoſe names ſtruck terror through the whole world? They were: but they are no more. They fell before the voice, that cried, *Return, ye children of men*, Pſal. xc. 3. "I ſaid, Ye are gods; but ye ſhall die like men," Pſal. lxxxii. 6. *I ſaid, Ye are gods;* this, ye great men of the earth! this is your title; this is the patent, that creates your dignity, that ſubjects us to your commands, and teacheth us to revere your characters: *but ye ſhall die like men;* this is the decree, that degrades you, and puts you on a level with us. *Ye are gods;* I will, then, reſpect your authority, and conſider you as images of him, *by whom kings reign: but ye ſhall die;* I will not, then, ſuffer myſelf to be impoſed on by your grandeur, and whatever homage I may yield to my king, I will always remember that he is a man. The certainty of death is the firſt ſide, on which we may conſider this murderer of

mankind,

mankind, and it is the firſt proof of our fourth propoſition: Mankind are equal in their *laſt end*.

2. The *proximity* of death is a ſecond demonſtration, a ſecond ſource of demonſtrations. The limits of our lives are equal. The life of the rich, as well as that of the poor, is *reduced to an hand-breadth*, Pſal. xxxix. 5. Sixty, eighty, or a hundred years, is uſually the date of a long life. The ſceptre hath no more privilege in this reſpect than the crook; nor is the palace at any greater diſtance from the tomb, than the cottage from the grave. Heaps of ſilver and gold may intercept the rich man's ſight of death; but they can neither intercept death's ſight of the rich man, nor prevent his forcing the feeble intrenchments, in which he may attempt to hide himſelf.

3. The *harbingers* of death are a third demonſtration, a third ſource of demonſtrations. The rich have the ſame forerunners as the poor; both have ſimilar dying agonies, violent ſickneſſes, diſguſtful medicines, intolerable pains, and cruel miſgivings. Paſs through thoſe ſuperb apartments, in which the rich man ſeems to defy the enemy, who lurks and threatens to ſeize him; go through the croud of domeſtics, who ſurround him; caſt your eyes on the bed, where nature and art have contributed to his eaſe. In this grand edifice, amidſt this aſſembly of courtiers, or, ſhall I rather ſay? amidſt this troop of vile ſlaves, you will find a moſt mortifying and miſerable object. You will ſee a viſage all pale, livid, diſtorted; you will hear the ſhrieks of a wretch tormented with the gravel, or the gout; you will ſee a ſoul terrified with the fear of thoſe eternal books, which are about to be opened, of that formidable tribunal, which is already erected, of the awful ſentence, that is about to be denounced.

4. The *ravages* of death make a fourth demonſtration; they are the ſame with the rich as with

with the poor. Death alike condemns their eyes to impenetrable night, their tongue to eternal silence, their whole ſyſtem to total deſtruction. I ſee a ſuperb monument. I approach this ſtriking object. I ſee magnificent inſcriptions. I read the pompous titles of the *most noble*, the *most puiſſant*, *general*, *prince*, *monarch*, *arbiter of peace*, *arbiter of war*. I long to ſee the inſide of this elegant piece of workmanſhip, and I peep under the ſtone, that covers him, to whom all this pomp is conſecrated; there I find, what - - - - - - a putrified carcaſe devouring by worms. O vanity of human grandeur! "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! Put not your truſt in princes, nor in the ſon of man, in whom is no help," Eccl. i. 2. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts periſh," Pſal. cxlvi. 3. 4. "As for man, his days are as graſs; as a flower of the field ſo he flouriſheth; for the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone: and the place thereof ſhall know it no more," Pſal. ciii. 15, 16.

5. Finally, *the judgment*, that follows death, carries our propoſition to the higheſt degree of evidence. "It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment," Heb. ix. 27. The rich and the poor muſt alike appear before that throne, which St. John deſcribes in the revelation, and before that venerable perſonage, *from whoſe face the heaven and the earth flee away*, chap. xx. 11. If there be any difference between the rich and the poor, it is all, methinks, in favour of the latter. The ſummons, that muſt be one day addreſſed to each of us, *give an account of thy ſtewardſhip*, Luke xvi. 2. this ſummons is always terrible. You indigent people! whom God (to uſe the language of ſcripture) hath *ſet over a few things*, an account of theſe *few things* will be required of you, and you will

be

be as ſurely puniſhed for hiding *one talent*, as if you had hidden more, Matt. xxv. 17.

But how terrible to me ſeems the account, that muſt be given of a great number of talents! If the rich man have ſome advantages over the poor, (and who can doubt that he hath many?) how are his advantages counterpoiſed by the thought of the conſequences of death! What a ſummons, my brethren! is this, for a great man, *Give an account of thy ſtewardſhip!* give an account of thy *riches*. Didſt thou acquire them lawfully? or were they the produce of unjuſt dealings, of cruel extortions, of repeated frauds, of violated promiſes, of perjuries and oaths? Didſt thou diſtribute them charitably, compaſſionately, liberally? or didſt thou reſerve them avariciouſly, meanly, barbarouſly? Didſt thou employ them to found hoſpitals, to procure inſtruction for the ignorant, relief for the ſick, conſolations for the afflicted? or didſt thou employ them to cheriſh thy pride, to diſplay thy vanity, to immortalize thine ambition and arrogance? Give an account of thy *reputation*. Didſt thou employ it to relieve the oppreſſed, to protect the widow and orphan, to maintain juſtice, to diffuſe truth, to propagate religion? or, on the contrary, didſt thou uſe it to degrade others, to deify thy paſſions, to render thyſelf a ſcourge to ſociety, a plague to mankind? Give an account of thine *honours*. Didſt thou direct them to their true end, by contributing all in thy power to the good of ſociety, to the defence of thy country, to the proſperity of trade, to the advantage of the public? or didſt thou direct them only to thine own private intereſt, to the eſtabliſhing of thy fortune, to the elevation of thy family, to the inſatiable avidity of glory, which gnawed and devoured thee? Ah! my brethren! if we enter very ſeriouſly into theſe reflections, we *ſhall not* be ſo much ſtruck, as we uſually are, with

with the diverſity of men's conditions in this life; we ſhall not aſpire very eagerly after the higheſt ranks in this world. *The rich and poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them all;* that is to ſay, he hath made them equal in their nature, equal in their privileges, equal in their deſtination, and equal, as we have proved, in their laſt end.

The inferences, that we intend to draw from what we have ſaid, are not inferences of ſedition and anarchy. We do not mean to diſturb the order of ſociety; nor, by affirming that all men have an eſſential equality, to rebrobate that ſubordination, without which ſociety would be nothing but confuſion, and the men, who compoſe it, a lawleſs banditti. We affirm, that the ſubject and the prince, the maſter and the ſervant, are truly and properly equal; but far be it from us to infer, that therefore the ſubject ſhould withdraw his ſubmiſſion from his prince, or the ſervant diminiſh his obedience to his maſter. On the contrary, ſubjects and ſervants would renounce all, that is glorious in their conditions, if they entertained ſuch wild ideas in their minds. That, which equals them to the ſuperiors, whom providence hath ſet over them, is the belief of their being capable, as well as their ſuperiors, of anſwering the end that God propoſeth in creating mankind. They would counteract this end, were they to refuſe to diſcharge thoſe duties of their condition, to which providence calls them.

Nor would we derive from the truths, which we have affirmed, fanatical inferences. We endeavoured before to preclude all occaſion for reproach on this article, yet perhaps we may not eſcape it; for how often does an unfriendly auditor, in order to enjoy the pleaſure of decrying a diſguſtful truth, affect to forget the corrective, with which the preacher ſweetens it? we repeat it, therefore, once more; we do not pretend to

affirm,

affirm, that the conditions of all men are abſolutely equal, by affirming that in ſome ſenſes all mankind are on a level. We do not ſay, that the man, whom ſociety agrees to contemn, is as happy as the man, whom ſociety unites to revere. We do not ſay, that the man, who hath no where to hide his head, is as happy as he, who is commodiouſly accommodated. We do not ſay, that a man, who is deſtitute of all the neceſſaries of life, is as happy as the man, whoſe fortune is ſufficient to procure him all the conveniences of it. No, my brethren! we have no more deſign to deduce inferences of fanaticiſm from the doctrine of the text, than we have to infer maxims of anarchy and rebellion. But we infer juſt concluſions, conformable to the precious gift of reaſon, that the Creator hath beſtowed on us, and to the incomparably more precious gift of religion, with which he hath enriched us. Derive then, my brethren, concluſions of theſe kinds, and let them be the application of this diſcourſe.

Derive from our ſubject concluſions of *moderation*. Labour, for it is allowable, and the morality of the goſpel doth not condemn it, labour to render your name illuſtrious, to augment your fortune, to eſtabliſh your reputation, to contribute to the pleaſure of your life; but labour no more than becomes you. Let efforts of this kind never make you loſe ſight of the great end of life. Remember, as riches, grandeur, and reputation, are not the ſupreme good, ſo obſcurity, meanneſs, and indigence, are not the ſupreme evil. Let the care of avoiding the ſupreme evil, and the deſire of obtaining the ſupreme good, be always the moſt ardent of our wiſhes, and let others yield to that of arriving at the chief good.

Derive from our doctrine concluſions of *acquiescence* in the laws of providence. If it pleaſe providence to put an eſſential difference between you and the great men of the earth, let it be

your

your holy ambition to excel in it. You cannot murmur without being guilty of reproaching God, because he hath made you what you are; because he formed you men, and not angels, archangels, or ſeraphims. Had he annexed eſſential privileges to the higheſt ranks, ſubmiſſion would always be your lot, and you ought always to adore, and to ſubmit to that intelligence, which governs the world; but this is not your caſe. God gives to the great men of the earth an exterior, tranſient, ſuperficial glory; but he hath made you ſhare with them a glory real, ſolid, and permanent. What difficulty can a wiſe man find by acquieſcing in this law of providence?

Derive from the truths you have heard concluſions of *vigilance*. Inſtead of ingeniouſly flattering yourſelf with the vain glory of being elevated above your neighbour, or of ſuffering your mind to ſink under the puerile mortification of being inferior to him, inceſſantly inquire what is the virtue of your ſtation, the duty of your rank, and uſe your utmoſt induſtry to fill it worthily. You are a magiſtrate: the virtue of your ſtation, the duty of your rank, is to employ yourſelf wholly to ſerve your fellow ſubjects in inferior ſtations, to prefer the public good before your own private intereſt, to ſacrifice yourſelf for the advantage of that ſtate, the reins of which you hold. Practiſe this virtue, fulfil theſe engagements, put off ſelf-intereſt, and devote yourſelf wholly to a people, who entruſt you with their properties, their liberties, and their lives. You are a ſubject: the duty of your rank, the virtue of your ſtation, is ſubmiſſion, and you ſhould obey not only through fear of puniſhment, but through a wiſe regard for order. Practiſe this virtue, fulfil this engagement, make it your glory to ſubmit, and in the authority of princes reſpect the power of God, whoſe miniſters and repreſentatives they are. You are a rich man: the virtue of your ſtation,

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the duty of your condition, is beneficence, generosity, magnanimity. Practiſe theſe virtues, diſcharge theſe duties. Let your heart be always moved with the neceſſities of the wretched, and your ears open to their complaints. Never omit an opportunity of doing good, and be in ſociety a general reſource, and univerſal refuge.

From the truths, which you have heard, derive motives of *zeal and fervour*. It is mortifying, I own, in ſome reſpects, when one feels certain emotions of dignity and elevation, to ſink in ſociety. It is mortifying to beg bread of one, who is a man like ourſelves. It is mortifying to be trodden under foot by our equals, and, to ſay all in a word, to be in ſtations very unequal among our equals. But this economy will quickly vaniſh. *The faſhion of this world* will preſently *paſs away*, and we ſhall ſoon enter that bleſſed ſtate, in which all diſtinctions will be aboliſhed, and in which all that is noble in immortal ſouls, will ſhine in all its ſplendor. Let us, my brethren, ſigh after this period, let us make it the object of our moſt conſtant and ardent prayers. God grant, we may all have a right to pray for it! God grant, our text may be one day verified in a new ſenſe. May all, who compoſe this aſſembly, maſters and ſervants, rich and poor, may we all, my dear hearers, having acknowledged ourſelves equal in eſſence, in privileges, in deſtination, in laſt end, may we all alike participate the ſame glory. God grant it, for his mercy's ſake.—Amen.

SERMON V.

THE WORTH OF THE SOUL.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

MY brethren, before we enforce the truths, which Jesus Christ included in the words of the text, we will endeavour to fix the meaning of it. This depends on the term *soul*, which is used in this passage, and which is one of the most equivocal words in scripture; for it is taken in different, and even in contrary senses, so that sometimes it signifies a *dead body*, Lev. xxi. 1. We will not divert your attention now, by reciting the long list of explications, that may be given to the term; but we will content ourselves with remarking, that it can be taken only in two senses in the text.

Soul may be taken for *life*; and in this sense the term is used by St. Matthew, who says, *They are dead, who sought the young child's soul*, chap. ii. 20. *Soul* may be taken for that spiritual part of us, which we call *the soul* by excellence; and in this sense it is used by our Lord, who says, *Fear not them, which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*, chap. x. 28.

If we take the words in the first sense, for *life*, we put into the mouth of Jesus Christ a proposition verified by experience; that is, that men consider life as the greatest of all temporal blessings, and that they part with every thing to preserve it. This rule hath its exceptions; but the exceptions confirm the rule. Sometimes, indeed, a disgust with the world, a principle of religion,

a point of honour, will incline men to ſacrifice their lives; but theſe particular caſes cannot prevent our ſaying in the general, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his life?*

If we take the word for that part of man, which we call the *ſoul* by excellence, Jeſus Chriſt intended to point out to us, not what men uſually do, (for alas! it happens too often, that men ſacrifice their ſouls to the meaneſt and moſt ſordid intereſt) but what they always ought to do. He meant to teach us, that the ſoul is the nobleſt part of us, and that nothing is too great to be given for its ranſom.

Both theſe interpretations are probable, and each hath its partizans and its proofs. But, although we would not condemn the firſt, we prefer the laſt, not only becauſe it is the moſt noble meaning, and opens the moſt extenſive field of meditation; but becauſe it ſeems to us the moſt conformable to our Saviour's deſign in ſpeaking the words.

Judge by what precedes our text. "What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?" Jeſus Chriſt ſpoke thus to fortify his diſciples againſt the temptations, to which their profeſſion of the goſpel was about to expoſe them. If by the word ſoul we underſtand the *life*, we ſhall be obliged to go a great way about to give any reaſonable ſenſe to the words. On the contrary, if we take the word for the *ſpirit*, the meaning of the whole is clear and eaſy. Now it ſeems to me beyond a doubt, that Jeſus Chriſt, by the manner in which he hath connected the text with the preceding verſe, uſed the term *ſoul* in the latter ſenſe.

Judge of our comment alſo by what follows. "What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?" *For*, adds our Lord immediately after, *the Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he ſhall reward*

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every man according to his works. What connexion have theſe words with our text, if we take the word *ſoul* for *life?* What connexion is there between this propoſition, *Man hath nothing more valuable than life*, and this, *For the Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels?* Whereas, if we adopt our ſenſe of the term, the connexion inſtantly appears.

We will, then, retain this explication. By the *ſoul* we underſtand here the *ſpirit* of man; and, this word being thus explained, the meaning of Jeſus Chriſt in the whole paſſage is underſtood in part, and one remark will be ſufficient to explain it wholly. We muſt attend to the true meaning of the phraſe, *loſe his ſoul*, which immediately precedes the text, and which we ſhall often uſe to explain the text itſelf. To *loſe the ſoul*, does not ſignify to be deprived of this part of one's ſelf; for, however great this puniſhment might be, it is the chief object of a wicked man's wiſhes: but to *loſe the ſoul*, is to loſe thoſe real bleſſings, and to ſuſtain thoſe real evils, which a ſoul is capable of enjoying and of ſuffering. When, therefore, Jeſus Chriſt ſays in the words, that precede the text, *What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?* and in the text, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* he exhibits one truth under different faces, ſo that our reflections will naturally be turned ſometimes to the one, and ſometimes to the other of theſe propoſitions. He points out, I ſay, two truths, which being united, ſignify, that as the conqueſt of the univerſe would not be an object of value ſufficient to engage us to ſacrifice our ſouls, ſo, if we had loſt them, no price could be too great to be paid for the recovery of them. Let us here fix our attention; and let us examine what conſtitutes the dignity of the ſoul. Let us inquire,

I. The excellence of its nature;
II. The infinity of its duration;
III. The price of its redemption: Three articles which will divide this diſcourſe.

I. Nothing can be given in exchange for our ſouls. We prove this propoſition by the excellence of its *nature*. What is the ſoul? There have been great abſurdities, in the anſwers given to this queſtion. In former ages of darkneſs, when moſt of the ſtudies, that were purſued for the cultivation of the mind, ſerved to render it unfruitful; when, people thought, they had arrived at the higheſt degree of knowledge, if they had filled their memories with pompous terms and ſuperb nonſenſe; in thoſe times, I ſay, it was thought, the queſtion might be fully and ſatisfactorily anſwered, and clear and complete ideas given of the nature of the ſoul. But in later times, when, philoſophy being cleanſed from the impurities that infected the ſchools, equivocal terms were rejected, and only clear and diſtinct ideas admitted, and thus literary inveſtigations reduced to real and ſolid uſe; in theſe days, I ſay, philoſophers, and philoſophers of great name, have been afraid to anſwer this queſtion, and have affirmed that the narrow limits, which confine our reſearches, diſable us from acquiring any other than obſcure notions of the human ſoul, and that all, which we can propoſe to elucidate the nature of it, ſerve rather to diſcover what it is not, than what it is. But if the deciſions of the former favour of the preſumption, does not the timid reſervedneſs of the latter ſeem a blameable modeſty? If we be incapable of giving ſuch ſufficient anſwers to the queſtion as would fully ſatisfy a genius earneſt in inquiring, and eager for demonſtration, may we not be able to give clear and high ideas of our ſouls, and ſo to verify theſe ſententious words of the Saviour of the world, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* Indeed,

Indeed, we do clearly and diſtinctly know three properties of the ſoul; and every one of us knows by his own experience, that it is capable of knowing, willing, and feeling. The firſt of theſe properties is intelligence, the ſecond volition, the third ſenſation, or, more properly, the acuteſt ſenſibility. I am coming now to the deſign of my text, and here I hope to prove, at leaſt to the intelligent part of my hearers, by the nature of the ſoul, that the loſs of it is the greateſt of all loſſes, and that nothing is too valuable to be given for its recovery.

Intelligence is the firſt property of the ſoul, and the firſt idea, that we ought to form of it, know its nature. The perfection of this property conſiſts in having clear and diſtinct ideas, extenſive and certain knowledge. *To loſe the ſoul*, in this reſpect, is to ſink into total ignorance. This loſs is irreparable, and he, who ſhould have loſt his ſoul in this ſenſe, could give nothing too great for its recovery. Knowledge and happineſs are inſeparable in intelligent beings, and, it is clear, a ſoul deprived of intelligence cannot enjoy perfect felicity. Few men, I know, can be perſuaded to admit this truth; and there are, I muſt allow, great reſtrictions to be made on this article, while we are in the preſent ſtate.

1. In our preſent ſtate, *every degree of knowledge, that the mind acquires, coſts the body much.* A man, who would make a progreſs in ſcience, muſt retire, meditate, and, in ſome ſenſe, involve himſelf in himſelf. Now meditation exhauſts the animal ſpirits, cloſe attention tires the brain; the collection of the ſoul into itſelf often injures the health, and ſometimes puts a period to life.

2. In our preſent ſtate, *our knowledge is confined within narrow bounds.* Queſtions the moſt worthy of our curioſity, and the moſt proper to animate and inflame us, are unanſwerable; for the objects lie beyond our reach. From all our efforts

efforts to eclaircife ſuch queſtions, we ſometimes derive only mortifying reflections on the weakneſs of our capacities, and the narrow limits of our knowledge.

3. In this preſent ſtate, *ſciences are incapable of demonſtration*, and conſiſt, in regard to us, of little more than probabilities and appearances. A man, whoſe genius is a little exact, is obliged in multitudes of caſes to doubt, and to ſuſpend his judgment; and his pleaſure of inveſtigating a point is almoſt always interrupted by the too well-grounded fear of taking a ſhadow for a ſubſtance, a phantom for a reality.

4. In this world, *moſt* of thoſe *ſciences*, in the ſtudy of which we ſpend the beſt part of life, *are improperly called ſciences*; they have indeed ſome diſtant relation to our wants in this preſent ſtate, but they have no reference at all to our real dignity. What relation to the real dignity of man hath the knowledge of languages, the arranging of various arbitrary and barbarous terms in the mind, to enable one to expreſs one thing in a hundred different words? What relation to the real dignity of man hath the ſtudy of antiquity? Is it worth while to hold a thouſand conferences, and to toil through a thouſand volumes, for the ſake of diſcovering the reveries of our anceſtors?

5. In this world, we often ſee *real* and uſeful *knowledge deprived of its luſtre*, through the ſupercilious neglect of mankind, and ſcience falſely ſo called crowned with their applauſe. One man, whoſe mind is a kind of ſcientific chaos, full of vain ſpeculations and confuſed ideas, ſhall be preferred before another, whoſe ſpeculations have always been directed to form his judgment, to purify his ideas, and to bow his heart to truth and virtue. This partiality is often ſeen. Now, although it argues a narrowneſs of ſoul to make *happineſs depend* on the opinion of others, yet it

is natural for intelligent beings, placed among other intelligent beings, to wiſh for that approbation which is due to real merit. Were the preſent life of any long duration, were not the proximity of all-purſuing death a powerful conſolation againſt all our inconveniences, theſe unjuſt eſtimations would be very mortifying.

Such being the imperfections, the defects, and the obſtacles of our knowledge, we ought not to be ſurpriſed, if in general we do not comprehend the great influence, that the perfection of our faculty of thinking and knowing hath over our happineſs. And yet even in this life, and with all theſe diſadvantages, our knowledge, however difficult to acquire, however confined, uncertain, and partial, how little ſoever it may be applauded, contributes to our felicity. Even in this life, there is an extreme difference between a learned and an illiterate man; between him, whoſe knowledge of languages enables him (ſo to ſpeak) to converſe with people of all nations, and of all ages, and him, who can only converſe with his own contemporary countrymen; between him, whoſe knowledge of hiſtory enables him to diſtinguiſh the ſucceſsful from the hazardous, and to profit by the vices and the virtues of his predeceſſors, and him, who falls every day into miſtakes inſeparable from the want of experience; between him, whoſe own underſtanding weighs all in the balance of truth, and him, who every moment needs a guide to conduct him. Even in this life, a man collected within himſelf, ſequeſtered from the reſt of mankind, ſeparated from an intercourſe with all the living, deprived of all that conſtitutes the bliſs of ſociety, entombed, if the expreſſion may be allowed, in a ſolitary cloſet, or in a duſty library, ſuch a man enjoys an innocent pleaſure, more ſatisfactory and refined than that, which places of diverſion the moſt frequented, and ſights the moſt ſuperb, can afford.

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But if, even in this life, learning and knowledge have ſo much influence over our happineſs, what ſhall we enjoy, when our ſouls ſhall be freed from their ſlavery to the ſenſes? What, when we are permitted to indulge to the utmoſt the pleaſing deſire of knowing? What felicity, when God ſhall unfold to our contemplation that boundleſs extent of truth and knowledge, which his intelligence revolves! What happineſs will accompany our certain knowledge of the nature, the perfections, and the purpoſes of God! What pleaſure will attend our diſcovery of the profound wiſdom, the perfect equity, and the exact fitneſs of thoſe events, which often ſurpriſed and offended us! Above all, what ſublime delight muſt we enjoy, when we find our own intereſt connected with every truth, and all ſerve to demonſtrate the reality, the duration, the inadmiſſibility of our happineſs! How think you, my brethren; is not ſuch a property beyond all valuation? Can the world indemnify us for the final loſs of it? If we have had the unhappineſs to loſe it, ought any thing to be accounted too great to be given for its recovery? And is not this expreſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, in this view of it, full of meaning and truth, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

What we have affirmed of the firſt property of our ſouls, that it is infinitely capable of contributing to our happineſs, although we can never fully comprehend it on earth, we affirm of the other two properties, volition and ſenſibility.

The perfection of the will conſiſts in a perfect harmony between the holineſs and the plenitude of our deſires. Now, to what degree ſoever we carry our holineſs on earth, it is always mixed with imperfection. And, as our holineſs is imperfect, our enjoyments muſt be ſo too. Moreover, as providence itſelf ſeems often to gratify an irregular will, we cannot well comprehend

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the misery of losing the soul in this respect. But judge of this loss, (and let one reflection suffice on this article) judge of this loss by this consideration. In that economy, into which our souls must enter, the Being, the most essentially holy, I mean God, is the most perfectly happy; and the most obstinately wicked being is the most completely miserable.

In like manner, we cannot well comprehend to what degree the property of our souls, that renders us susceptible of sensations, can be carried. How miserable soever the state of a man, exposed to heavy afflictions on earth, may be, a thousand causes lessen the weight of them. Sometimes reason assists the sufferer, and sometimes religion, sometimes a friend condoles, and sometimes a remedy relieves; and this thought at all times remains, death will shortly terminate all my ills. The same reflections may be made on sensations of pleasure, which are always mixed, suspended, and interrupted.

Nevertheless, the experience we have of our sensibility on earth, is sufficient to give us some just notions of the greatness of that loss, which a soul may sustain in this respect; nor is there any need to arouze our imaginations by images of an economy, of which we have no idea.

The most depraved of mankind, they, who are slaves to their senses, may comprehend the great misery of a state, in which the senses will be tormented, even better than a believer can, who usually studies to diminish the authority of sense, and to free his soul from its lawless sway.

Judge ye, then, of the loss of the soul, ye sensual minds, by this single consideration, if you have been insensible to all the rest. When we endeavoured to convince you of the greatness of this loss, by urging the privation of that knowledge, which the elect enjoy now, and which they hope to enjoy hereafter, you were not affected with

with this misery, because you considered the pleasure of knowing as a chimera. When we attempted to convince you of the misery of losing the soul, by urging the privation of virtue, and the stinging remorse that follows sin, you were not touched with this misery, because virtue you consider as a restraint, and remorse as a folly. But as you know no other felicity, nor any other misery, than what your senses transmit to your souls, judge of the loss of the soul by conceiving a state, in which all the senses shall be punished. The loss of the soul, is the loss of those harmonious sounds, which have so often charmed your ears; it is the loss of those exquisite flavours, that your palate has so often relished; it is the loss of all those objects of desire, which have excited your passions. The loss of the soul is an ocean of pain, the bare idea of which hath so often made you tremble, when religion called you to fast on it. The loss of the soul will be in regard to you the imprisonment of yon confessor, inclosed in a dark and filthy dungeon, a prey to infection and putrefaction, deprived of the air and the light. The loss of the soul will reduce you to the condition of that galley slave, groaning under the lashes of a barbarous officer, who is loaded with a galling chain, who sinks under the labour of that oar which he works, or rather, with which he himself is trailing along. The loss of the soul will place you in the condition of yon martyr on the wheel, whose living limbs are disjointed and racked, whose lingering life is loth to cease, who lives to glut the rage of his tormentors, and who expires only through an overflowing access of pain, his executioners with the barbarous industry being frugal of his blood and his strength, in order to make him suffer as much as he can possibly suffer before he dies.

But, as I said before, all these images convey but very imperfect ideas of the loss of our souls.

Were

Were we to extend our ſpeculations as far as the ſubject would allow, it would be eaſy to prove, that the ſoul is capable of enjoying ſenſible pleaſures infinitely more refined, and of ſuffering pains infinitely more excruciating, than all thoſe which are felt in this world. In this world, ſenſations of pleaſure and pain are proportioned to the end, that the Creator propoſed in rendering us capable of them. This end is almoſt always the preſervation and well-being of the body during the ſhort period of mortal life. To anſwer this end, it is not neceſſary, that pleaſure and pain ſhould be ſo exquiſite as our ſenſes may be capable of enduring. If our ſenſes give us notice of the approach of things hurtful and beneficial to us, it is ſufficient.

But in heaven ſenſible pleaſures will be infinitely more exquiſite. There the love of God will have its free courſe. There the promiſes of religion will all be fulfilled. There the labours of the righteous will be rewarded. There we ſhall diſcover how far the power of God will be diſplayed in favour of an elect ſoul. In like manner, the extent of divine power in puniſhing the wicked will appear in their future ſtate of miſery. That juſtice muſt be glorified, which nothing but the blood of Jeſus Chriſt could appeaſe in favour of the elect. There the ſinner muſt fall a victim to the wrath of God. There he muſt experience how *fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. x. 31. Hath a man, who is threatened with theſe miſeries, any thing too valuable to give for his redemption from them? Is not the nature of our ſouls, which is known by theſe three properties, underſtanding, volition, and ſenſibility, expreſſive of its dignity? Does not this demonſtrate this propoſition of our Saviour, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

II. The *immortality* of a ſoul conſtitutes its dignity, and its endleſs duration is a ſource of demonſtrations in favour of the propoſition in the text. This dignity is inconteſtible. The principle of the immortality of the ſoul, from which we reaſon, is undeniable. Two ſuppoſitions may ſeem, at firſt ſight, to weaken the evidence of the immortality of the ſoul. Firſt, the cloſe union of the ſoul to the body ſeems unfavourable to the doctrine of its immortality, and to predict its diſſolution with the body. But this ſuppoſition, methinks, vaniſheth, when we conſider what a diſproportion there is between the properties of the ſoul and thoſe of the body. This diſproportion proves, that they are two diſtinct ſubſtances. The ſeparation of two diſtinct ſubſtances, makes indeed ſome change in the manner of their exiſting; but it can make none really in their exiſtence.

But, whatever advantages we may derive from this reaſoning, I freely acknowledge, that this, of all philoſophical arguments for the immortality of the ſoul, the leaſt of any affects me. The great queſtion, on this article, is not what we think of our ſouls, when we conſider them in themſelves, independently on God, whoſe omnipotence ſurrounds and governs them. Could an infidel demonſtrate, againſt us, that the human ſoul is material, and that therefore it muſt periſh with the body; could we, on the contrary, demonſtrate, againſt him, that the ſoul is immaterial, and that therefore it is not ſubject to laws of matter, and muſt ſurvive the deſtruction of the body; neither ſide, in my opinion, would gain any thing conſiderable. The principal queſtion, that, which alone ought to determine our notions on this article, would remain unexamined; that is, whether God will employ his power over our ſouls to perpetuate or to deſtroy them. For, could an infidel prove, that God would employ

his

his power to annihilate our ſouls, in vain ſhould we have demonſtrated that they were naturally immortal; for we ſhould be obliged to own, that they are mortal in reſpect of the will of that God, whoſe omnipotence rules them. In like manner, if we could prove to an unbeliever, that God would employ his power to preſerve them in eternal exiſtence, in vain would he have demonſtrated, that conſidered in themſelves they are mortal; and he would be obliged in his turn to allow that human ſouls are immortal, in virtue of the ſupreme power of God. Now, my brethren, the ſuppoſition, that God will employ his power to annihilate our ſouls, will entirely diſappear, if you attend to the well-known and familiar argument of the connexion between the immortality of the ſoul, and that deſire of immortality which the Creator hath imparted to it. What can we reply to a man who reaſons in this manner?

I find myſelf in a world, where all things declare the perfections of the Creator. The more I conſider all the parts, the more I admire the fitneſs of each to anſwer the end of him who created them all. Among numberleſs productions, perfectly correſpondent to their deſtination, I find only one being, whoſe condition doth not ſeem to agree with that marvellous order, which I have obſerved in all the reſt. This being is my own ſoul. And what is this ſoul of mine? Is it fire? Is it air? Is it ethereal matter? Under whatever notions I conſider it, I am at a loſs to define it. However, notwithſtanding this obſcurity, I do perceive enough of its nature to convince me of a great diſproportion between the preſent ſtate of my ſoul, and that end for which its Creator ſeems to have formed it. This ſoul, I know, I feel, (and, of all arguments, there are none more convincing than thoſe that are taken from ſentiment) this ſoul is a being eagerly bent on the *enjoyment* of a happineſs infinite in its duration.

duration. Should any one offer me a ſtate of perfect happineſs, that would continue ten thouſand years, an aſſemblage of reputation and riches, grandeur and magnificence, perhaps, dazzled with its glare, I might cede my pretenſions in conſideration of this enjoyment. But, after all, I fully perceive, that this felicity, how long, and how perfect ſoever it might be, would be inadequate to my wiſhes. Ten thouſand years are too few to gratify my deſires; my deſires leap the bounds of all fixed periods of duration, and roll along a boundleſs eternity. What is not eternal is unequal to my wiſhes, eternity only can ſatisfy them.

Such is my ſoul. But where is it lodged? Its place is the ground of my aſtoniſhment. This ſoul, this ſubject of ſo many deſires, inhabits a world of vanity and nothingneſs. Whether I climb the higheſt eminences, or pry into the deepeſt indigence, I can diſcover no object capable of filling my capacious deſires. I aſcend the thrones of ſovereigns, I deſcend into the beggar's duſt; I walk the palaces of princes, I lodge in the peaſant's cabin; I retire into the cloſet to be wiſe, I avoid recollection, chooſe ignorance, and increaſe the crowd of idiots; I live in ſolitude, I ruſh into the ſocial multitude; but every where I find a mortifying void. In all theſe places there is nothing ſatisfactory. In each I am more unhappy, through the deſire of ſeeing new objects, than ſatisfied with the enjoyment of what I poſſeſs. At moſt, I experience nothing in all theſe pleaſures, which my concupiſcence multiplies, but a mean of rendering my condition tolerable, not a mean of making it perfectly happy.

How can I reconcile theſe things? How can I make the Creator agree with himſelf? There *is one* way of doing this, a ſingular, but a certain way; a way, that ſolves all difficulties, and

covers

covers infidelity with confuſion; a way, that teacheth me what I am, whence I came, and for what my Creator hath deſigned me. Although God hath placed me in this world, yet he doth not deſign to limit my proſpects to it; though he hath mixed me with mere animals, yet he doth not intend to confound me with them; though he hath lodged my ſoul in a frail periſhable body, yet he doth not mean to involve it in the diſſolution of this frame. Without ſuppoſing immortality, that, which conſtitutes the dignity of man, makes his miſery. Theſe deſires of immortal duration, this faculty of thinking and reflecting, of expanding and perpetuating the mind; this ſuperiority of ſoul, that ſeems to elevate mankind above beaſts, actually place the beaſt above the man, and fill him with theſe bitter reflections full of mortification and pain. Ye crawling reptiles! ye beaſts of the field! deſtitute of intelligence and reaſon! if my ſoul be not immortal, I envy your condition. Content with your own organs, pleaſed with ranging the fields and browſing the herbage, your deſires need no reſtraint; for all your wiſhes are fully ſatisfied. While I, abounding on the one hand with inſatiable deſires, and on the other confined amidſt vain and unſatisfactory objects, I am on this account unhappy!

We repeat theſe philoſophical reaſonings, my brethren, only for the ſake of convincing you, that we are in poſſeſſion of immenſe advantages over ſceptics in this diſpute. On the principles of an unbeliever, you ſee, were his notion of revelation well-grounded; were the ſacred book, in which ſo many characters of truth ſhine, an human production; were a reaſonable man obliged to admit no other propoſitions than thoſe, which have been allowed at the tribunal of right reaſon; yea, we ſay more, were our ſouls material, we ought, *on* the ſuppoſitions before mentioned,

to admit the immortality of the ſoul as moſt conformable to our beſt notions of the will of our Creator.

But, when we are thus convinced of our immortality, need we any new arguments to demonſtrate the propoſition included in the text, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* Moſt ſubjects may be made to appear with greater or leſs dignity, according to the greater or ſmaller degree of importance, in which the preacher places it. Pompous expreſſions, bold figures, lively images, ornaments of eloquence, may often ſupply a want of dignity in the ſubject diſcuſſed, or a want of proper diſpoſitions in auditors, who attend the diſcuſſion of it. But, in my opinion, every attempt to give importance to a motive taken from eternity, is more likely to enfeeble the doctrine than to invigorate it. Motives of this kind are ſelf-ſufficient. Deſcriptions the moſt ſimple, and the moſt natural, that can be made, are always, I think, the moſt pathetic, and the moſt terrifying; nor can I find an expreſſion, on this article, more eloquent and more emphatical than this of St. Paul, *The things which are ſeen, are temporal; but the things which are not ſeen, are eternal*, 2 Cor. iv. 18. Were the poſſeſſion of the whole world the price you aſk, in *exchange for your ſouls*; were the whole world free from thoſe characters of vanity, which open ſuch a boundleſs field to our reflections; would there not always be this diſproportion between a periſhing world and a ſoul aſpiring at felicity, that the world would end and the ſoul would never die?

Death puts an end to the moſt ſpecious titles, to the moſt dazzling grandeur, and to the moſt delicious life; and the thought of this period of human glory reminds me of the memorable action *of a prince*, who, although he was a heathen, *was wiſer than many chriſtians*; I mean the great

Saladin.

Saladin. After he had ſubdued Egypt, paſſed the Euphrates, and conquered cities without number; after he had retaken Jeruſalem, and performed exploits more than human, in thoſe wars, which ſuperſtition had ſtirred up for the recovery of the holy land; he finiſhed his life in the performance of an action, that ought to be tranſmitted to the moſt diſtant poſterity. A moment before he uttered his laſt ſigh, he called the herald, who had carried his banner before him in all his battles, he commanded him to faſten to the top of a lance, the ſhroud, in which the dying prince was ſoon to be buried. Go, ſaid he, carry this lance, unfurl this banner, and, while you lift up this ſtandard, proclaim, *This, this is all, that remains to Saladin the great, the conqueror and the king of the empire, of all his glory.** Chriſtians! I perform to-day the office of this herald. I faſten to the top of a ſpear, ſenſual and intellectual pleaſures, worldly riches, and human honours. All theſe I reduce to the piece of crape, in which you will ſhortly be buried. This ſtandard of death I lift up in your ſight, and I cry, This, this is all, that will remain to you, of the poſſeſſions for which you exchanged your ſouls. Are ſuch poſſeſſions too great to be given in exchange for ſuch a ſoul? Can the idea of their periſhing nature prevail over the idea of the immortality of the ſoul? And do you not feel the truth of the text, *What ſhall a man*, a rational man, a man who is capable of comparing eternity with time, what ſhall ſuch a man *give in exchange for his ſoul?*

Finally, we make a reflection of another kind, to convince you of the dignity of your ſouls, and to perſuade you, that nothing can be too valuable to be given in exchange for them. This is taken from the aſtoniſhing works, that God hath performed

* *Maimb.* Hiſt. des Croiſades, lib. vi. p. 572. de l'Edit. in 4.

performed in their favour. We will confine ourſelves to one article, to the ineſtimable price, that God hath given for the redemption of them. Hear theſe words of the holy ſcriptures, *Ye are bought with a price. Ye were redeemed from your vain converſation, not with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold; but with the precious blood of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Pet. i. 18.

Some of you, perhaps, may ſay, as the limits of a ſermon will not allow us to ſpeak of more than one of the wondrous works of God in favour of immortal ſouls, we ought, at leaſt, to chooſe that, which is moſt likely to affect an audience, and not to dwell on a ſubject, which, having been ſo often repeated, will make only ſlight impreſſions on their minds. Perhaps, were we to inform you, that, in order to ſave your ſouls, God had ſubverted formerly all the laws of nature, or, to uſe the language of a prophet, that he had *ſhaken the heavens and the earth, the ſea and the dry land*, Hag. ii. 6. perhaps, were we to tell you, that, in order to ſave your ſouls, God deferred the end of the world, and put off the laſt viciſſitudes, that are to put a period to the duration of this univerſe; that, according to St. Peter, *the Lord is long-ſuffering to us-ward*, 2 Pet. iii. 9. perhaps, were we to affirm, that, in order to ſave our ſouls, he will come one day on the clouds of heaven, ſitting on a throne, ſurrounded with glorious angels, accompanied with myriads of ſhouting voices, to deliver them with the greater pomp, and to ſave them with more ſplendour: perhaps, by relating all theſe mighty works done for our ſouls, we might excite in you ideas of their dignity, more lively than that, which we have choſen, and to which we intend to confine our attention. But, ſurmount, if you can, your cuſtomary indolence, and form an adequate idea of the dignity of the ſacrifice of Jeſus *Chriſt, in order* the better to judge of the dignity

of

of thoſe ſouls, of which his blood was the price.

Go, learn it in heaven. Behold the Deity. Approach his throne. Obſerve the *thousand thousands miniſtering unto him, ten thousand times ten thousand ſtanding before him*, Dan. vii. 10. See his eyes ſparkling with fire, and his majeſty and glory filling his ſanctuary, and, by the dignity of the victim ſacrificed, judge of the value of the ſacrifice.

Go, ſtudy it in all the economies, that preceded this ſacrifice. Obſerve the types, which prefigured it; the ſhadows, that traced it out; the ceremonies, which depicted it; and, by the pomp of the preparations, judge of the dignity of the ſubſtance prepared.

Go, learn it on mount Calvary. Behold the wrath, that fell on the head of Jeſus Chriſt. Behold his blood pouring out upon the earth, and him, your Saviour, drinking the bitter cup of divine diſpleaſure. See his hands and his feet nailed to the croſs, and his whole body one great wound; obſerve the unbridled populace foaming with rage around the croſs, and glutting their ſavage ſouls with his barbarous ſufferings; and, by the horror of the cauſes that contributed to his death, judge of the death itſelf.

Go to the infidel, and let him teach you the dignity of the ſacrifice of Chriſt. Remember, on this account he attacks chriſtianity, and he hath ſome ſhew of reaſon for doing ſo; for if this religion may be attacked on any ſide, with the leaſt hope of ſucceſs, it is on this. The truths of the chriſtian religion are inconteſtible; but if there be any one article of the goſpel, which requires an entire docility of mind, an abſolute ſubmiſſion of heart, a perfect deference to God, who ſpeaks, it is the article of the ſacrifice of the croſs. Weigh the objections, and by the greatneſs of the difficulties judge of the dignity of the *myſtery*. Recollect,

Recollect, chriſtian! God thought fit to require the blood of his Son for the redemption of our ſouls. Theſe ſouls muſt have been very precious in the ſight of God, ſince he redeemed them at a price ſo immenſe. The miſery into which they were liable to be plunged, muſt have been extremely terrible, ſince God thought proper to make ſuch great efforts to ſave them from it. The felicity, of which they are capable, and to which the Lord intends to elevate them, muſt be infinitely valuable, ſince it coſt him ſo much to bring them to it. For what in the univerſe is of equal value with the blood of the Son of God? Diſappear, all ye other miracles, wrought in favour of our ſouls! ye aſtoniſhing prodigies, that confirmed the goſpel! thou, delay of the conſummation of all things! ye great and terrible ſigns of the ſecond coming of the Son of God! Vaniſh before the miracle of the croſs; for the croſs ſhines you all into darkneſs and ſhade. This glorious light makes your glimmering vaniſh; and after my imagination is filled with the tremendous dignity of this ſacrifice, I can ſee nothing great beſide. But, if God, if this juſt appraiſer of things, hath eſtimated our ſouls at ſuch a rate, ſhall we ſet a low price on them? If he hath given ſo much for them, do we imagine we can give too much for them? If, for their redemption, he hath ſacrificed the moſt valuable perſon in heaven, do we imagine there is any thing upon earth too great to give up for them?

No, no, my brethren! after what we have heard, we ought to believe, that there is no ſhadow of exaggeration in this exclamation of Jeſus Chriſt, *What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world and loſe his own ſoul?* I do not certainly know what our Saviour meant to ſay; whether he intended to ſpeak of a man, *who ſhould gain the whole world*, and inſtantly loſe

lose his soul; or of one, who should not *lose his soul* till long after he had obtained *the whole world*, and had reigned over it through the course of a long life. But I do know, that the words are true, even in the most extensive sense. Suppose a man, who should not only enjoy universal empire for one whole age, but for a period equal to the duration of the world itself; the proposition, that is implied in the words of Jesus Christ, is applicable to him. Such a soul as we have described, a soul so excellent in its nature, so extensive in its duration, so precious through its redemption; a soul capable of acquiring so much knowledge, of conceiving so many desires, of experiencing so much remorse, of feeling so many pleasures and pains; a soul, that must subsist beyond all time, and perpetuate itself to eternity; a soul redeemed by the blood of the Son of God; a soul so valuable ought to be preferred before all things, and nothing is too precious to be given for its exchange. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

However, my brethren, we are willing to acknowledge, were we in the case supposed by Jesus Christ; were it in our power to gain the whole world by losing our own souls; or, being actually universal monarchs, were we obliged to sacrifice this vast empire to recover our souls already lost; were we, being smitten with the splendid offer, or being alarmed at the immense price of our purchase, to prefer the whole world before our own souls; we might then, if not exculpate our conduct, yet at least give a little colour to it; if we could not gain our cause, we might however plead it with some shew of reason. A reason of state, a political motive, as that of governing a whole universe, would naturally have some influence over us. The titles of Sovereign,

Sovereign, Monarch, Emperor, would naturally charm little ſouls, like ours. Sumptuous palaces, ſuperb equipages, a crowd of devoted courtiers, bowing and cringing before us, and all that exterior grandeur which environs the princes of the earth, would naturally faſcinate ſuch feeble eyes, and infatuate ſuch puerile imaginations as ours. I repeat it again, could we obtain the government of the univerſe by the ſale of our ſouls, if we could not juſtify our conduct, we might extenuate the guilt of it; and although we could not gain our cauſe, we might at leaſt plead it with ſome ſhew of reaſon.

But is this our caſe? Is it in our power to *gain the whole world?* Is this the price, at which we ſell our ſouls? O ſhame of human nature! O meanneſs of ſoul, more proper to confound us, than any thing elſe, with which we can be reproached! This intelligent ſoul, this immortal ſoul, this ſoul which has been thought worthy of redemption by the blood of the Saviour of the world, this ſoul we often part with for nothing, and for leſs than nothing! In our condition, placed as moſt of us are, in a ſtate of mediocrity; when by diſſipation and indolence, by injuſtice and iniquity, by malice and obſtinacy, we ſhall have procured from vice all the rewards that we can expect, what ſhall we have gained? Cities? Provinces? Kingdoms? A long and proſperous reign? God hath not left theſe to our choice. His love would not ſuffer him to expoſe us to a temptation ſo violent. Accordingly we put up our ſouls at a lower price. See this old man, rather dead than alive, bowing under his age, ſtooping down, and ſtepping into the grave; at what price does he exchange his ſoul? at the price of a few days of a dying life; a few pleaſures, ſmothered under a pile of years, if I may ſpeak ſo, or buried under the ice of old age. That officer in the army, who thinks he alone

underſtands

underſtands real grandeur; at what rate does he value his ſoul? He loſes it for the ſake of the falſe glory of ſwearing expertly, and of uniting blaſphemy and politeneſs. What does yon mechanic get for his ſoul? One acre of land, a cottage bigger and leſs inconvenient than that of his neighbour.

Unmanly wretches! If we be bent on renouncing our dignity, let us, however, keep up ſome appearance of greatneſs. Sordid ſouls! if we will reſign our nobleſt pretenſions, let us do it, however, in favour of ſome other pretenſions, that are real. "Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this! and be ye horribly afraid; for my people have committed two evils: they have forſaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water," Jer. ii. 12. Do you perceive, my brethren, the force of this complaint, which God anciently uttered over his people the Jews, and which he now utters over us? Neither genius nor erudition can explain it. Could they, you might perhaps underſtand it. A certain elevation, a certain dignity of ſoul, ſingular ſentiments of heart, are the only expoſitors of theſe affecting words. Therefore, I fear, they are unintelligible to moſt of you. "Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this! and be ye horribly afraid; for my people have committed two evils: they have forſaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water." God loves us, he deſires we ſhould love him. He has done every thing to conciliate our eſteem. For us he ſent his Son into the world. For us he diſarmed death. For us he opened an eaſy path to a glorious eternity. And all this, to render himſelf maſter of our hearts, and to engage us to return him love for love, life for life. We reſiſt all theſe attractives, we prefer other objects before him.

No matter, he would paſs this ingratitude, if the objects, which we prefer before him, were capable of making us happy; if, at leaſt, they bore any apparent proportion to thoſe, which he offereth to our hopes. But what arouſeth his diſpleaſure, what provokes his juſt indignation, what excites reproaches, that would cleave our hearts aſunder, were they capable of feeling, is the vanity of the objects, which we prefer before him. The ſoul, in exchange for which the whole world would not be a ſufficient conſideration, this ſoul we often give for the moſt mean, the moſt vile, the moſt contemptible part of the world. "O ye heavens! be aſtoniſhed at this, at this be ye horribly afraid; for my people have committed two evils: they have forſaken me, the fountain of the living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water."

But do we know, ungrateful that we are, do we know, that if the hardneſs of our hearts prevent our feeling in particular the energy of this reproof, and in general the evidence of the reflections, that make the ſubſtance of this diſcourſe; do we know that a day will come, when we ſhall feel them in all their force? Do we know, that there is now a place, where the truth of our text appears in a clear but a terrible light? Yes, my brethren, this reflection is perhaps eſſential to our diſcourſe, this perhaps approaches neareſt to the meaning of Jeſus Chriſt; perhaps Jeſus Chriſt, in theſe words, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* meant to inform us of the diſpoſition of a man in deſpair, who, immerſed in all the miſeries that can excruciate a ſoul, ſurpriſed at having parted with ſuch a ſoul at a price ſo ſmall, ſtricken with the enormous crime of loſing it, wiſhes, but too late, to give every thing to recover it.

Ideas, like theſe, we never propoſe to you without reluctance. Motives of another kind

ſhould

ſhould ſuffice for chriſtians. Learn the worth of your ſouls. Enter into the plan of your Creator, who created them capable of eternal felicity; and into that of your Redeemer, who died to enable you to arrive at it. Againſt all the deceitful promiſes, which the world, the fleſh, and the devil, uſe to ſeduce you, oppoſe theſe words of Jeſus Chriſt, *What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or, what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* May God inſpire you with theſe noble ſentiments! To him be honour and glory for ever.—Amen.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

ISAIAH ix. 6, 7.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his *government and peace* there shall be *no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever.*

I ANTICIPATE the feſtival, which the goodneſs, or rather the magnificence of God, invites you to celebrate on Wedneſday next. All nature ſeems to take part in the memorable event, which on that day we ſhall commemorate, I mean the birth of the Saviour of the world. Herod turns pale on his throne; the devils tremble in hell; the wiſe men of the eaſt ſuſpend all their ſpeculations, and obſerve no ſign in the firmament, except that which conducts them to the place where lies the incarnate Word, *God manifeſt in the fleſh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. an angel from heaven is the herald of the aſtoniſhing event, and tells the Shepherds, *Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people, for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord*, Luke ii. 10, 11. *the multitude of the heavenly hoſt* eagerly deſcend to congratulate men on the Word's aſſumption of mortal fleſh, on his *dwelling among men*, in order to enable them to *behold his glory, the glory of the only begotten* of the Father, full

of

of grace and truth, John i. 14. they make the air reſound with theſe acclamations, *Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good will toward men*, Luke ii. 14.

What think ye? Does this feſtival require no preparation of you? Do you imagine, that you ſhall celebrate it as you ought, if you content yourſelves with attending on a few diſcourſes, during which, perhaps, while you are preſent in body, you may be abſent in ſpirit; or with laying aſide your temporal cares, and your moſt turbulent paſſions, at the church-gates, in order to take them up again, as ſoon as divine ſervice ends? The king Meſſiah is about to make his triumphant entry among you. With what pomp do *the children of this world*, who are *wiſe*, and, we may add, magnificent *in their generation*, Luke xvi. 8. celebrate the entries of their princes? They ſtrew the roads with flowers, they raiſe triumphal arches, they expreſs their joy in ſhouts of victory, and in ſongs of praiſe. Come, then, my brethren, let us to-day *prepare the way of the Lord, and make his paths ſtraight*, Matt. iii. 3. let us *be joyful together before the Lord*, let us *make a joyful noiſe before the Lord the King, for he cometh to judge the earth*, Pſal. xcviii. 6, 9. or, to ſpeak in a more intelligible, and in a more evangelical manner, Come, ye miſerable ſinners, loaden with the unſupportable burden of your ſins; come, ye troubled conſciences, uneaſy at the remembrance of your many idle words, many criminal thoughts, many abominable actions; come, ye poor mortals, *toſſed with tempeſts and not comforted*, Iſa. liv. 11. condemned firſt to bear the infirmities of nature, the caprices of ſociety, the viciſſitudes of age, the turns of fortune, and then the horrors of death, and the frightful night of the tomb; come, behold *The Wonderful, The Counſellor, The Mighty* God, The Everlaſting *Father, The Prince of Peace*; take him into your

arms, learn to desire nothing more, when you possess him. May God enable each of you, in transports of joy, to say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* Amen.

You have heard the prophecy, on which our meditations in this discourse are to turn. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever." These words are more dazzling than clear: let us fix their true meaning; and, in order to ascertain that, let us divide this discourse into two parts,

I. Let us explain the prediction.

II. Let us shew its accomplishment.

In the first part, we will prove, that the prophet had the Messiah in view; and, in the second, that our Jesus had fully answered the design of the prophet, and hath accomplished, in the most just and sublime of all senses, the whole prediction: *Unto us a child is born*, and so on.

I. Let us explain the prophet's prediction, and let us fix on the extraordinary child, to whom he gives the magnificent titles in the text. Indeed, the grandeur of the titles sufficiently determines the meaning of the prophet; for to whom, except to the Messiah, can these appellations belong, *The Wonderful, The Counsellor, The mighty God, The Prince of Peace, The everlasting Father?* This natural sense of the text, is supported by the authority of an inspired writer, and what is, if not of any great weight in point of *argument*, at least, very singular as an historical *fact, it is* supported by the authority of an angel.

gel. The inſpired writer, whom we mean, is St. Matthew, who manifeſtly alludes to the words of the text, by quoting thoſe which precede them, which are connected with them, and which he applies to the times of the Meſſiah: for, having related the impriſonment of John, and, in conſequence of that, the retiring of Jeſus Chriſt into Galilee, he adds, that the divine Saviour *came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up*, Matt. iv. 12. The angel, of whom I ſpoke, is Gabriel; who, when he declared to Mary the choice which God had made of her to be the mother of the Meſſiah, applied to her Son the characters, by which Iſaiah deſcribes the child in the text, and paints him in the ſame colours: *Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever: and of his kingdom there shall be no end*, Luke i. 31, &c.

How concluſive ſoever theſe proofs may appear in favor of the ſenſe we have given of the prophecy, they do not ſatisfy this intractable age, which is always ready to embrace any thing that ſeems likely to enervate the truths of religion. Sincerity requires us to acknowledge, that although our prophecy is clear of itſelf, yet there ariſeth ſome obſcurity from the order in which it is *placed*, and from its connection with the foregoing and following verſes. On each we will endeavor

endeavor to throw ſome light, and for this purpoſe, we will go back, and analyſe this, and the two preceding chapters.

When Iſaiah delivered this prophecy, Ahaz reigned over the kingdom of Judah, and Pekah, the ſon of Remaliah, over that of Iſrael. You cannot be ignorant of the mutual jealouſy of theſe two kingdoms. There is often more hatred between two parties, whoſe religion is almoſt the ſame, than between thoſe whoſe doctrines are in direct oppoſition. Each conſiders the other as near the truth: each is jealous leſt the other ſhould obtain it: and, it is more likely that they, who hold the eſſential truths of religion, ſhould ſurpaſs others ſooner than they, who raze the very foundations of it, the former are greater objects of envy than the latter. The kingdoms of Iſrael and Judah were often more envenomed againſt one another than againſt foreigners. This was the caſe in the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah. Pekah, king of Iſrael, to the ſhame of the ten tribes, diſcovered a diſpoſition like that, which hath ſometimes made the chriſtian world bluſh; I mean, that a Prince, who worſhipped the true God, in order to deſtroy his brethren, made an alliance with an idolater. He allied himſelf to Rezin, a pagan Prince, who reigned over that part of Syria, which conſtituted the kingdom of Damaſcus. The kingdom of Judah had often yielded to the forces of theſe kings, even when each had ſeparately made war with it. Now they were united; and intended jointly to fall on the Jews, and to overwhelm, rather than to beſiege Jeruſalem. Accordingly, the conſternation was ſo great in the holy city, that, the ſcripture ſays, *The heart of Ahaz was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind*, Iſa. vii. 2.

Although the kingdom of Judah had too well *deſerved* the puniſhments, which threatened it; and

and although a thouſand outrages, with which the inhabitants had inſulted the Majeſty of heaven, ſeemed to guarantee their country to the enemy, yet God came to their aſſiſtance. He was touched, if not with the ſincerity of their repentance, at leaſt with the exceſs of their miſeries. He commanded Iſaiah to encourage their hopes. He even promiſed them, not only that all the deſigns of their enemies ſhould be rendered abortive: but that the two confederate kingdoms, *within three score and five years*, ver. 8. ſhould be entirely deſtroyed. Moreover, he gave Ahaz the choice of a ſign to convince himſelf of the truth of the promiſe. Ahaz was one of the moſt wicked kings, that ever ſat on the throne of Judah: ſo that the ſcripture could give no worſe character of this prince, nor deſcribe his perſeverance in ſin more fully, than by ſaying, that he *was always Ahaz.** He refuſed to chooſe a ſign, not becauſe he felt one of thoſe noble emotions, which makes a man ſubmit to the teſtimony of God without any more proof of its truth than the teſtimony itſelf; but becauſe he was inclined to infidelity and ingratitude, and, probably, becauſe he truſted in his ally, the king of Aſſyria. Notwithſtanding his refuſal, God gave him ſigns, and informed him, that before the prophet's two children, one of whom was already born, and the other would be born ſhortly, ſhould arrive at years of diſcretion, the two confederate kings ſhould retreat from Judea, and ſhould be entirely deſtroyed.

Of the firſt child, ſee what the ſeventh chapter of the Revelations of our prophet ſays. We are there told, that this ſon of the prophet was named Shearjaſhub, that is, *the remnant ſhall return*, ver. 3. a name expreſſive of the meaning of

* 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. *This* is that *king* Ahaz. Eng. Verſion. *C'eſtoit* toujours *le* roi Achaz. Fr. Idem erat *rex Achaz.* Jun. Tremel.

of the ſign, which declared that the Jews ſhould return from their rebellions, and that God would return from his anger. The other child, then unborn, is mentioned in the eighth chapter, where it is ſaid *the prophetess bare a ſon*, ver. 3.

God commanded the prophet to take the firſt child, and to carry him to that pool, or piece of water, which was formed by the waters of Siloah, which ſupplied the ſtream known by the name of *The fuller's conduit*; 2 Kings xviii. 17. and which was at the foot of the eaſtern wall of Jeruſalem. The prophet was ordered to produce the child in the preſence of all the affrighted people, and to ſay to them, *Before this child ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest, ſhall be forſaken of both her kings*, Iſa. vii. 16. If this tranſlation be retained, *the land* ſignifies the kingdom of Iſrael, and that of Syria, from which the enemy came, and which, on account of their coming, the Jews *abhorred*. I ſhould rather render the words, *the land, for which thou art afraid*, and by *the land* underſtand Judea, which was then in a very dangerous ſtate. But the prophecy began to be accompliſhed in both ſenſes about a year after it was uttered. Tiglath Pileſer, king of Aſſyria, not only drew off the forces of Rezin and Pekah, from the ſiege of Jeruſalem, but he drave them alſo from their own countries. He firſt attacked Damaſcus. Rezin quitted his intended conqueſt, and returned to defend his capital, where he was ſlain; and all his people were carried into captivity, 2 Kings xvi. 9. Tiglath Pileſer then marched into the kingdom of Iſrael, and victory marched along with him at the head of his army, 1 Chron. v. 26. He ſubdued the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manaſſeh, all the inhabitants of Galilee, and the tribe of Nephthalim, and carried them captives beyond Euphrates; and ſixty five years after, that is, ſixty

five

five years after the prediction of the total ruin of the kingdom of Iſrael by the prophet Amos, the prophecy was fulfilled by Salmanaſſar, chap. vii. 11. according to the language of our prophet, *within three score and five years ſhall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people*, Iſa. vii. 8. Thus was this prophecy accompliſhed, *before this child ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and choose the good, the land, for which thou art afraid, ſhall be forſaken of both her kings.*

God determined that the prophet's ſecond child ſhould alſo be a ſign of the truth of the ſame promiſe. He aſſured Iſaiah, that before the child, who ſhould ſhortly be born, could learn to articulate the firſt ſounds which children were taught to pronounce; "before the child ſhould have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damaſcus, and the ſpoil of Samaria," that is, of the kingdom of Iſrael, "ſhould be taken away by the king of Aſſyria," chap. viii. 4. This is the ſame promiſe confirmed by a ſecond ſign. God uſually giveth more than one, when he confirmeth any very intereſting prediction, as we ſee in the hiſtory of Pharaoh, and the patriarch Joſeph, Gen. xli. 1, &c.

But, as all the mercies that were beſtowed on the Jews from the time of Abraham, were grounded on the covenant, which God had made with that patriarch, their common father and head; or rather, as, ſince the fall, men could expect no favor of God but in virtue of the mediator of the church; it is generally to be obſerved in the prophecies, that when God gave them a promiſe, he directed their attention to this grand object. Either the idea of the covenant, or the idea of the mediator, was a ſeal, which God put to his promiſes, and a bar againſt the unbelief and diſtruſt of his people. Every thing might be expected from a God, whoſe goodneſs was ſo infi-

nite,

nite, as to prepare ſuch a noble victim for the ſalvation of mankind. He, who would confine Satan in everlaſting chains, and vanquiſh ſin and death, was fully able to deliver his people from the incurſions of Rezin, and Pekah, the ſon of Remaliah. To remove the preſent fears of the Jews, God reminds them of the wonders of his love, which he had promiſed to diſplay in favor of his church, in ages to come: and commands his prophet to ſay to them, "Ye trembling leaves of the wood, ſhaken with every wind, peace be to you! Ye timorous Jews, ceaſe your fears! let not the greatneſs of this temporal deliverance, which I now promiſe you, excite your doubts! God hath favors incomparably greater in ſtore for you, they ſhall be your guarantees for thoſe, which ye are afraid to expect. Ye are in covenant with God. Ye have a right to expect thoſe diſplays of his love in your favor which are leaſt credible. Remember the *bleſſed ſeed*, which he promiſed to your anceſtors, Gen. xxii. 18. "Behold! a virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Immanuel," Iſa. vii. 14. The ſpirit of prophecy, that animates me, enables me to penetrate through all the ages that ſeparate the preſent moment from that in which the promiſe ſhall be fulfilled. I ſee the divine child, my "faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen," Heb. xi. 1. and grounded on the word of that God, *who changeth not*, Mal. iii. 6. who "is not a man, that he ſhould lie, neither the ſon of man, that he ſhould repent," Numb. iii. 19. I dare ſpeak of a miracle, which will be wrought eight hundred years hence, as if it had been wrought to-day, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder: and his name ſhall be called, Wonderful, Counſellor, The mighty God, The everlaſting Father, The Prince of Peace."

This,

This, my brethren, is the prophet's ſcope in the three chapters which we have analyzed, and particularly in the text. But, if any one of you receive our expoſition without any farther diſcuſſion, he will diſcover more docility than we require, and he would betray his credulity without proving his conviction. How often doth a commentator ſubſtitute his own opinions for thoſe of his author, and by forging, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, a new text, elude the difficulties of that which he ought to explain? Let us act more ingenuouſly. There are two difficulties, which attend our comment; one is a particular, the other is a general difficulty.

The *particular* difficulty is this. We have ſuppoſed, that the myſterious child, ſpoken of in our text, is the ſame, of whom the prophet ſpeaks, when he ſays, "A virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Immanuel:" and that this child is different from that, whom Iſaiah gave for a ſign of the preſent temporal deliverance, and of whom it is ſaid, "before the child ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good, the land, that thou abhorreſt, ſhall be forſaken of both her kings." This ſuppoſition does not ſeem to agree with the text; read the following verſes, which are taken from the ſeventh chapter. "Behold! a virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Immanuel: Butter and honey ſhall he eat, that he may know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good. But before the child ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good, the land, that thou abhorreſt, ſhall be forſaken of both her kings," ver. 14, 15, 16. Do not the laſt words, "before the child ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good," ſeem to belong to the words which immediately precede them, "Behold! a virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a ſon?" *Immanuel*, then, who was to be born of a *virgin*, could not be the Meſſiah;

the prophet muſt mean the child, of whom he ſaid, *before he know to refuſe the evil, and choose the good*, Judea ſhall be delivered from the two confederate kings.

How indiſſoluble ſoever this objection may appear, it is only an apparent difficulty, and it lies leſs in the nature of the thing, than in the arrangement of the terms. Repreſent to yourſelves the prophet executing the order, which God had given him, as the third verſe of the ſeventh chapter relates. "Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjaſhub thy ſon, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool." Imagine Iſaiah, in the preſence of the Jews, holding his ſon Shearjaſhub in his arms, and addreſſing them in this manner. The token, that God gives you, of your preſent deliverance, that he is ſtill your God, and that ye are ſtill his covenant people, is the renewal of the promiſe to you, which he made to your anceſtors concerning the Meſſiah: to convince you of the truth of what I aſſert, I diſcharge my commiſſion, "Behold! a virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Immanuel," that is, *God with us*. He ſhall be brought up like the children of men, "butter and honey ſhall he eat, until he know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good," that is, until he arrive at years of maturity. In virtue of this promiſe, which will not be ratified till ſome ages have expired, behold what I promiſe you now; *before the child*, not before the child, whom, I ſaid juſt now, *a virgin ſhould bear*: but before the child in my arms, (the phraſe may be rendered *before this child*) before Shearjaſhub, whom I now lift up, "ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good, the land, for which ye are in trouble, ſhall be forſaken of both her kings." You ſee, my brethren, *the child*, whom, the prophet ſaid, *a virgin ſhould conceive*, could not be Shearjaſhub, who was actually preſent in his father's

father's arms. The difficulty, therefore, is only apparent, and, as I obſerved before, it lay in the arrangement of the terms, and not in the nature of the thing. This is our anſwer to what I called a *particular* difficulty.

A *general* objection may be made againſt the manner in which we have explained theſe chapters, and in which, in general, we explain other prophecies. Allow me to ſtate this objection in all its force, and, if I may uſe the expreſſion, in all its enormity, in order to ſhew you, in the end, all its levity and folly.

The odious objection is this. An unbeliever would ſay, the three chapters of Iſaiah, of which you have given an arbitrary analyſis, are equivocal and obſcure, like the greateſt part of thoſe compilations, which compoſe the book of the viſionary flights of this prophet, and like all the writings, that are called *predictions*, *prophecies*, *revelations*. Obſcurity is the grand character of them, even in the opinion of thoſe who have given ſublime and curious explanations of them. They are capable of ſeveral ſenſes. Who hath received authority to develope thoſe ambiguous writings, to determine the true meaning, among the many different ideas, which they excite in the reader, and to each of which the terms are alike applicable! During ſeventeen centuries, chriſtians have racked their invention to put a ſenſe on the writings of the prophets advantageous to chriſtianity, and the greateſt geniuſes have endeavored to interpret them in favor of the chriſtian religion. Men, who have been famous for their erudition and knowledge, have taken the moſt laborious pains to methodize theſe writings; one generation of great men hath ſucceeded another in the undertaking; is it aſtoniſhing that ſome degree of ſucceſs hath attended their labors, and that by dint of indefatigable induſtry, they have rendered thoſe prophecies venerable, which

would

would have been accounted dark and void of design, if leſs pains had been taken to adapt a deſign, and leſs violence had been uſed in arranging them in order?

This is the objection in all its force, and, as I ſaid before, in all its enormity. Let us inquire whether we can give a ſolution proportional to this boaſted objection of infidelity. Our anſwer will be compriſed in a chain of propoſitions, which will guard you againſt thoſe, who find myſtical meanings, where there are none, as well as againſt thoſe, who diſown them, where they are. To theſe purpoſes attend to the following propoſitions.

1. They were not the men of our age, who forged the book, in which we imagine, we diſcover ſuch profound knowledge: we know it is a book of the moſt venerable antiquity, and we can demonſtrate that it is the moſt ancient book in the world.

2. This venerable antiquity, however, is not the chief ground of our admiration: the benevolence of its deſign; the grandeur of its ideas; the ſublimity of its doctrines; the holineſs of its precepts; are, according to our notion of things, if not abſolute proofs of its divinity, at leaſt, advantageous preſumptions in its favor.

3. Among divers truths which it contains, and which, it may be ſuppoſed, ſome ſuperior geniuſes might have diſcovered, I meet with ſome, the attainment of which I cannot reaſonably attribute to the human mind: of this kind are ſome predictions, obſcure, I grant, to thoſe to whom they were firſt delivered, but rendered very clear ſince by the events. Such are theſe two among many others. The people, who are in covenant with God, ſhall be excluded; and people, who are not, ſhall be admitted. I ſee the accompliſhment of theſe predictions with my own eyes, in the rejection of the Jews, and in the calling of the Gentiles.

4. The

4. The ſuperior characters, which ſignalize theſe books, give them the right of being myſterious in ſome places, without expoſing them to the charge of being equivocal, or void of meaning; for ſome works have acquired this right. When an author hath given full proof of his capacity in ſome propoſitions, which are clear and intelligible; and when he expreſſeth himſelf, in other places, in a manner obſcure, and hard to be underſtood, he is not to be taxed, all on a ſudden, with writing irrationally. A meaning is to be ſought in his expreſſions. It is not to be ſuppoſed, that geniuſes of the higheſt order ſink at once beneath the loweſt minds. Why do we not entertain ſuch notions of our prophets? Why is not the ſame juſtice due to the extraordinary men, whoſe reſpectable writings we are pleading for; to our Iſaiahs, and Jeremiahs, which is allowed to Juvenal and Virgil? What! ſhall ſome pretty thought of the latter, ſhall ſome ingenious ſtroke of the former, conciliate more reſpect to them, than the noble ſentiments of God, the ſublime doctrines, and the virtuous precepts of the holy ſcriptures, can obtain for the writers of the bible?

5. We do not pretend, however, to abuſe that reſpect, which it would be unjuſt to withhold from our authors. We do not pretend to ſay that every obſcure paſſage contains a myſtery, or that, whenever a paſſage appears unintelligible, we have a right to explain it in favor of the doctrine, which we profeſs: but we think it right to conſider any paſſage in theſe books prophetical, when it has the three following marks.

The firſt is *the inſufficiency of the literal meaning.* I mean, a text muſt be accounted prophetical, when it cannot be applied, without offering violence to the language, to any event, that fell out when it was ſpoken, or to any then preſent, or paſt object.

2. The second character of a prophecy, is *an infallible commentary.* I mean, when an author of acknowledged authority, gives a prophetical sense to a passage under consideration, we ought to submit to his authority, and adopt his meaning.

3. The last character is *a perfect conformity between the prediction and the event.* I mean, when prophecies, compared with events, appear to have been completely accomplished, several ages after they had been promulged, it cannot be fairly urged that the conformity was a lucky hit: but, it ought to be acknowledged, that the prophecy proceeded from God, who, being alone capable of foreseeing what would happen, was alone capable of foretelling the event, in a manner so circumstantial and exact. All these characters unite in favor of the text, which we have been explaining, and in favor of the three chapters, which we have, in general, expounded.

The first character, that is, the insufficiency of a literal sense, agrees with our explication. Let any event, in the time of Isaiah, be named, any child born then, or soon after, of whom the prophet could reasonably affirm what he does in our text, and in the other verse, which we have connected with it. "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

The second distinguishing mark, that is, an infallible commentary, agrees with our explication. Our evangelists and apostles, those venerable men, whose mission comes recommended to us by the most glorious miracles, by the healing of the sick, by the expulsion of demons, by the raising *of the dead,* by a general subversion of all nature,

ture, our evangeliſts and apoſtles took theſe paſſages in the ſame ſenſe, in which we take them, they underſtood them of the Meſſiah, as we have obſerved before.

The third character, that is, a perfect conformity between event and prediction, agrees alſo with our explication. We actually find *a child*, ſome ages after the time of Iſaiah, who exactly anſwers the deſcription of him, of whom the prophet ſpoke. The features are ſimilar, and we own the likeneſs. Our Jeſus was really born of *a virgin*; he was truly *Immanuel, God with us*: in him are really united, all the titles, and all the perfections, of the "Wonderful, The Counſellor, The mighty God, The everlaſting Father;" as we will preſently prove. Can we help giving a myſterious meaning to theſe paſſages? Can we refuſe to acknowledge, that the prophet intended to ſpeak of the Meſſiah? Theſe are the ſteps, and this is the end of our meditation in favor of the myſtical ſenſe, which we have aſcribed to the words of the text.

Would to God, the enemies of our myſteries would open their eyes to theſe objects, and examine the weight of theſe arguments! Would to God, a love, I had almoſt ſaid a rage, for independency, for a ſyſtem that indulges, and inflames the paſſions, had not put ſome people on oppoſing theſe proofs! Infidelity and ſcepticiſm would have made leſs havoc among us, and would not have decoyed away ſo many diſciples from truth and virtue! And would to God alſo, chriſtian miniſters would never attempt to attack the ſyſtems of infidels and ſcepties without the armour of demonſtration! Would to God, love of the marvellous may no more dazzle the imaginations of thoſe, who ought to be guided by truth alone! And would to God, the ſimplicity and the ſuperſtition of the people may never more contribute to ſupport that authority, which

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ſome raſh and dogmatical geniuſes uſurp! Truth ſhould not borrow the arms of falſehood to defend itſelf; nor virtue thoſe of vice. Advantages ſhould not be given to unbelievers and heretics, under pretence of oppoſing hereſy and unbelief. We ſhould render to God *a reaſonable ſervice*, Rom. xii. 1. we ſhould be all *ſpiritual men, judging all things*, 1 Cor. ii. 15. according to the expreſſion of the apoſtle. But I add no more on this article.

Hitherto we have ſpoken, if I may ſay ſo, to reaſon only, it is time now to ſpeak to conſcience. We have been preaching by arguments and ſyllogiſms to the underſtanding, it is time now to preach by ſentiments to the heart. Religion is not made for the mind alone, it is particularly addreſſed to the heart, and to the heart I would prove, that our Jeſus hath accompliſhed, in the moſt ſublime of all ſenſes, this prophecy in the text: *Unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given*, and ſo on. This is our ſecond part.

II. The terms *throne, kingdom, government*, are metaphorical, when they are applied to God, to his Meſſiah, to the end, which religion propoſeth, and to the felicity, which it procures. They are very imperfect, and, if I may venture to ſay ſo, very low and mean, when they are uſed to repreſent objects of ſuch infinite grandeur. No, there is nothing ſufficiently noble in the characters of the greateſt kings, nothing wiſe enough in their maxims, nothing gentle enough in their government, nothing pompous enough in their courts, nothing ſufficiently glorious in their exploits, to repreſent fully the grandeur and glory of our Meſſiah.

Who is a king? What is a throne? Why have we maſters? Why is ſovereign power lodged in a few hands? and what determines mankind to lay aſide their independence, and to *loſe their beloved* liberty? The whole implies,

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my brethren, ſome mortifying truths. We have not knowledge ſufficient to guide ourſelves, and we need minds wiſer than our own to inſpect and to direct our conduct. We are indigent, and ſuperior beings muſt ſupply our wants. We have enemies, and we muſt have guardians to protect us.

Miſerable men! how have you been deceived in your expectations? What diſorders could anarchy have produced, greater than thoſe, which have ſometimes proceeded from ſovereign authority? You ſought guides to direct you: but you have ſometimes fallen under the tuition of men, who, far from being able to conduct a whole people, knew not how to guide themſelves. You ſought nurſing fathers, to ſuccour you in your indigence: but you have fallen ſometimes into the hands of men, who had no other deſigns than to impoveriſh their people, to enrich themſelves with the ſubſtance, and to fatten themſelves with the blood of their ſubjects. You ſought guardians to protect you from your enemies: but you have ſometimes found executioners, who have uſed you with greater barbarity, than your moſt bloody enemies would have done.

But, all theſe melancholy truths apart, ſuppoſe the fine notions, which we form of kings and of royalty, of ſovereign power, and of the hands that hold it, were realized: how incapable are kings, and how inadequate is their government, to the relief of the innumerable wants of an immortal ſoul! Suppoſe kings of the moſt tender ſentiments, formidable in their armies, and abundant in their treaſuries; could they heal the maladies, that afflict us here, or could they quench our painful thirſt for felicity hereafter? Ye Cæſars! Ye Alexanders! Ye Trajans! Ye, who were, ſome of you, like Titus, the parents of your people, and the delights of mankind, ye thunderbolts of war! Ye idols of the world!

What

What doth all your pomp avail me? Of what uſe to me are all your perſonal qualifications, and all your regal magnificence? Can you, Can they, diſſipate the darkneſs, that envelopes me; calm the conſcience, that accuſes and torments me; reconcile me to God; free me from the controul of my commanding and tyrannical paſſions; deliver me from death; and diſcover immortal happineſs to me? Ye earthly gods! ignorant and wretched like me; objects like me of the diſpleaſure of God; like me, expoſed to the miſeries of life; ſlaves to your paſſions like me; condemned like me to that frightful night in which death involveth all mankind; ye can relieve neither your own miſeries nor mine!

Shew me a government, that ſupplies theſe wants: that is the empire I ſeek. Shew me a king, who will conduct me to the felicity, to which I aſpire: ſuch a king I long to obey. My brethren, this empire we are preaching to you: Such a king is the king Meſſiah. *Unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given, the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder; and his name ſhall be called,* WONDERFUL, becauſe he is the ſubſtance and the centre of all the wondrous works of God.

But purify your imaginations, and do not always judge of man as if he were a being deſtitute of reaſon and intelligence. When we ſpeak of man, do not conceive of a being of this preſent world only; a creature placed for a few days in human ſociety, wanting nothing but food and raiment, and the comforts of a temporal life: but attend to your own hearts. In the ſad circumſtances, into which ſin hath brought you, what are your moſt important wants? We have already inſinuated them. You need knowledge; you need reconciliation with God; you want ſupport through all the miſeries of life; and you need conſolation againſt the fear of death.

Well!

Well! all theſe wants the king Meſſiah ſupplies. I am going to prove it, but I conjure you, at the ſame time, not only to believe, but to act. I would, by publiſhing the deſign of the Saviour's incarnation, engage you to concur in it. By explaining to you the nature of his empire, I would fain teach you the duties of his ſubjects. By celebrating the glory of the king Meſſiah, I long to ſee it diſplayed among you in all its ſplendid magnificence.

You want *knowledge*. You will find it in the king Meſſiah. He is the COUNSELLOR. He is the *true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, John i. 9. *In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon him, the Lord hath appointed him to preach good tidings unto the meek*, Iſa. lxi. 1. The Spirit of the Lord reſts upon him, the *ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, the ſpirit of counſel and might, the ſpirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord*, chap. xi. 2. He hath *the tongue of the learned*, chap. l. 4. and the wiſdom of the wiſe. Aſk him to explain to you the grand appearances of nature, which exerciſe the ſpeculations of the moſt tranſcendent geniuſes, and abſorb their defective reaſon, and all his anſwers will diſcover the moſt profound and perfect knowledge of them. Inquire of him whence all the viſible creation came, the luminaries of heaven, and the magnificent treaſures of the earth. Aſk him to reveal to you the *God, who hideth himſelf*, Iſa. xlv. 15. Aſk him the cauſe of thoſe endleſs diſorders, which mix with that profuſion of wiſdom, which appears in the world. Aſk him whence the bleſſings come, which we enjoy, and whence the calamities, that afflict us. Aſk him what is the origin, the nature, the deſtiny, the end of man. Of all theſe articles the COUNSELLOR will tell you more than Plato, and Socrates, and all the philoſophers,

philoſophers, who only *felt after* the truth, Acts xvii. 27. who themſelves diſcovered, and taught others to ſee, only a few rays of light darkened with prejudices and errors.

This is the firſt idea of the king Meſſiah; this is the firſt ſource of the duties of his ſubjects, and of the diſpoſitions, with which they ought to celebrate his nativity, and with which alone they can celebrate it in a proper manner. To celebrate properly the feſtival of his nativity, truth muſt be eſteemed; we muſt be deſirous of attaining knowledge; we muſt come from the ends of the earth, like the wiſe men of the eaſt, to contemplate the miracles, which the Meſſiah diſplays in the new world; like Mary, we muſt be all attention to receive the doctrine, that proceeds from his ſacred mouth; like the multitude, we muſt follow him into deſerts and mountains, to hear his admirable ſermons. This is the firſt duty, which the feſtival, that you are to celebrate next Wedneſday, demands. Prepare yourſelves to keep it in this manner.

You want *reconciliation* with God, and this is the grand work of the king Meſſiah. He is THE PRINCE OF PEACE. He terminates the fatal war, which ſin hath kindled between God and you, by obtaining the pardon of your paſt ſins, and by enabling you to avoid the commiſſion of ſin for the future. He obtains the pardon of paſt ſins for you. How can a merciful God reſiſt the ardent prayers, which the Redeemer of mankind addreſſeth to him in behalf of thoſe poor ſinners, for whom he ſacrificed himſelf? How can a merciful God reſiſt the plea of the blood of his Son, which cries for mercy for the miſerable poſterity of Adam? As the king Meſſiah reconciles you to God, by obtaining the pardon of your paſt ſin, ſo he reconciles you, by procuring ſtrength to enable you to avoid it for time to come. Having calmed thoſe paſſions which

prevented

prevented your knowing what was right, and your loving what was lovely, he gave you laws of equity and love. How can you reſiſt, after you have known him, the motives, on which his laws are founded? Every difficulty diſappears, when examples ſo alluring are ſeen, and when you are permitted, under your moſt diſcouraging weakneſſes, to approach the treaſures of grace, which he hath opened to you, and to derive purity from its ſource. Doth gratitude know any difficulties? Is not every act of obedience eaſy to a mind animated by a love as vehement as that, which cannot but be felt for a Saviour, who in the tendereſt manner hath loved us?

This is the ſecond idea of the king Meſſiah, this is the ſecond ſource of the duties of his ſubjects, and of the diſpoſitions eſſential to a worthy celebration of the feaſt of his nativity. Come next Wedneſday deeply ſenſible of the danger of having that God for your enemy, who holds your deſtiny in his mighty hands, and whoſe commands all creatures obey. Come with an eager deſire of reconciliation to him. Come and hear the voice of *the Prince of Peace*, who publiſheth *peace; peace to him that is near, and to him that is far off*, Iſa. lvii. 19. While Moſes mediated a covenant between God and the Iſraelites, on the top of the holy mountain, let not Iſrael violate the capital article at the foot of it. While Jeſus Chriſt is deſcending to reconcile you to God, do not declare war againſt God; inſult him not by voluntary rebellions, after he hath voluntarily delivered you from the ſlavery of ſin, under which you groaned. Return not again to thoſe ſins, which *ſeparated between you and your God*, Iſa. lix. 2. and which would do it again, though Jeſus ſhould become incarnate again, and ſhould offer himſelf every day to expiate them.

You need *ſupport under the calamities of this life*, and this alſo you will find in the king Meſ-

ſiah. He is THE MIGHTY GOD, and he will tell you, while you are ſuffering the heavieſt temporal afflictions, although "the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, *yet* my kindneſs ſhall not depart from you, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed," chap. liv. 10. Under your ſevereſt tribulations, he will aſſure you, that *all things work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. viii. 28. He will teach you to ſhout victory under an apparent defeat, and to ſing this triumphant ſong, "Thanks be unto God, who always cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt," 2 Cor. ii. 14. "In all theſe things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us," Rom. viii. 37.

This is the third idea of the king Meſſiah, and this is the third ſource of the duties of his ſubjects, and of the diſpoſitions which are neceſſary to the worthily celebrating of the feſtival of his nativity. Fall in, chriſtian ſoul! with the deſign of thy Saviour, who, by elevating thy deſires above the world, would elevate thee above all the cataſtrophes of it. Come, behold Meſſiah, the king, lodging in a ſtable, and lying in a manger: hear him ſaying to his diſciples, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have neſts; but the ſon of man hath not where to lay his head," Matt. viii. 20. Learn from this example not to place thy happineſs in the poſſeſſion of earthly good. Die to the world, die to its pleaſures, die to its pomps. Aſpire after other ends, and nobler joys, than thoſe of the children of this world, and then worldly viciſſitudes cannot ſhake thy bliſs.

Finally, You have need of one *to comfort you under the fears of death*, by opening the gates of eternal felicity to you, and by ſatiating your avidity of exiſtence and elevation. This conſolation the king Meſſiah affords. He is the *everlaſting Father*, THE FATHER OF ETERNITY,

&c.

his throne shall be built up for all generations, Pſal. lxxxix. 4. he hath received "dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, ſhould ſerve him; his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed," Dan. vii. 14. and his ſubjects muſt reign eternally with him. When thou, chriſtian! art confined to thy dying bed, he will approach thee with all the attractive charms of his power and grace: he will ſay to thee, *Fear not, thou worm Jacob*, Iſa. xli. 14. he will whiſper theſe comfortable words in thine ear, "When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee: and when through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burned; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee," chap. xliii. 2. He will open heaven to thee, as he opened it to St. Stephen; and he will ſay to thee, as he ſaid to the converted thief, "To-day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe," Luke xxiii. 43.

This is the fourth idea of the king Meſſiah, and this is the fourth ſource of the duties of his ſubjects. How glorious is the feſtival of his nativity! What grand, noble, and ſublime ſentiments doth it require of us! The ſubjects of the king Meſſiah, the children of *the everlaſting Father*, ſhould conſider the economy of time in its true point of view, they ſhould compare "things which are ſeen, which are temporal, *with* things which are not ſeen, which are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 18. They ſhould fix their attention upon the eternity, fill their imaginations with the glory of the world to come, and learn, by juſt notions of immortality, to eſtimate the preſent life; the "declining ſhadow; the withering graſs; the fading flower; the dream, that flyeth away; the vapour, that vaniſheth," and is irrecoverably loſt, Pſal. cii. 11. Iſa. xl. 7. Job xx. 8. and *James iv. 14.*

These,

These, my brethren, are the characters of your king Messiah, these are the characters of the divine child, whose birth you are to celebrate next Wednesday, and in these ways only can you celebrate it as it deserves. We conjure you by that adorable goodness, which we are going to testify to you again; we conjure you by that throne of grace, which God is about to ascend again; we conjure you by those ineffable mercies, which our imaginations cannot fully comprehend, which our minds cannot sufficiently admire, nor all the emotions of our hearts sufficiently esteem; we conjure you to look at, and, if you will pardon the expression, to lose yourselves in these grand objects; we conjure you not to turn our solemn festivals, and our devotional days, into seasons of gaming, irreligion, and dissipation. Let us submit ourselves to the king Messiah; let us engage ourselves to his government; let his dominion be the ground of all our joy.

"O most mighty! thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee for ever!" Psal. xlv. 2, 3. "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion," saying, "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies! Thy people shall be willing in the day, when thou shalt assemble thy host in holy pomp!"* Yea, reign over thine enemies,

* We retain the reading of the *French* Bible here; because our author paraphrases the passage after that version. *Ton peuple*: Vers. "ton peuple plein *de franc vouloir au jour que tu assembleras tes armées en la sainte pompe. Thy people* shall be *willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness*, &c. The passage seems to be a prophetical allusion to one of those solemn festivals, in which conquerors, and their armies, on their return from battle, offered a part of their spoil, which they had taken from their enemies, to God, from whom the victory came. These *free-will* offerings were *carried in* grand procession. They were holy, because

mies, great King ! bow their rebellious wills ; prevent their fatal counſels ; defeat all their bloody deſigns ! Reign alſo over thy friends, reign over us ! Make us *a willing people !* Aſſemble all this congregation, when thou ſhalt come with *thy hoſt in holy pomp !* Let not the flying of the clouds, which will ſerve thee for a triumphal chariot ; let not the pomp of the holy angels in thy train, when thou ſhalt come to *judge the world in righteouſness*, Acts xvii. 31. let not theſe objects affright and terrify our ſouls : let them charm and tranſport us ; and, inſtead of dreading thine approach, let us haſten it by our prayers and ſighs ! *Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly, Amen.* To God be honor and glory, for ever and ever.—Amen.

agreeable to the economy, under which the Jews lived; and they were *beautifully* holy, becauſe they were not exacted, but proceeded from the *voluntary* gratitude of the *army*. In large conqueſts, the troops and the offerings were out of number, like the drops of ſuch a ſhower of *dew*, as the *morning brought forth* in the *youth*, or *ſpring* of the year. See 2 Chron. xiv. 13, 14, 15. and xv. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. We have ventured this hint on a paſſage, which ſeems not very clear in our verſion.

SERMON VII.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

PSALM cxviii. 15, 16.

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.

WOMAN! why weepest thou? John xx. 13, 15. was the language of two angels and of Jesus Christ to Mary. The Lord had been crucified. The infant church was in mourning. The enemies of christianity were triumphing. The faith of the disciples was tottering. Mary had set out before dawn of day, to give vent to her grief, to bathe the tomb of her Master with tears, and to render funeral honors to him. In these sad circumstances, the heavens opened, two angels clothed in white garments descended, and placed themselves on the tomb, that inclosed the dear depositum of the love of God to the church. At the fixed moment, they rolled away the stone, and Jesus Christ arose from the grave loaden with the spoils of death. Hither Mary comes to see the dead body, the poor remain of him, *who should have redeemed Israel*, Luke xxiv. 21. and finding the tomb empty, abandons her whole soul to grief, and bursts into floods of tears. The heavenly messengers directly address these comfortable words to her, *Woman! Why weepest thou?* Scarcely had she told them the cause of her grief, before Jesus puts the same question to her, *Woman! Why weepest thou?* And to this language, which insinuateth into her heart, and exciteth,

citeth, if I may venture to ſpeak ſo, from the bottom of her ſoul every emotion of tenderneſs and love, of which ſhe is capable, he adds, *Mary!*

This is the magnificent, this is the affecting object, on which the eyes of all the church are this day fixed. This is the comfortable language which heaven to-day proclaims. For ſeveral weeks paſt you have been in tears. Your churches have been in mourning. Your eyes have beheld only ſad and melancholy objects. On the one hand, you have been examining your conſciences, and your minds have been overwhelmed with the ſorrowful remembrance of broken reſolutions, violated vows, and fruitleſs communions. On the other, you have ſeen Jeſus, betrayed by one diſciple, denied by another, forſaken by all; Jeſus, delivered by prieſts to ſecular powers, and condemned by his judges to die; Jeſus, *ſweating, as it were, great drops of blood*, Luke xxii. 44. praying in Gethſemane: *O my Father! if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me*, Matt. xxvi. 39, and crying on Mount Calvary, *My God! My God! Why haſt thou forſaken me?* chap. xxvii. 46. Jeſus, lying in the grave: theſe have been the mournful objects of your late contemplation. At the hearing of this tragical hiſtory, conſcience trembles; and the whole church, on ſeeing the Saviour intombed, weeps as if ſalvation were buried with him. But take courage, thou tremulous conſcience! Dry up thy tears, thou church of Jeſus Chriſt! "Looſe thyſelf from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Sion!" Iſa. lii. 2. Come, my brethren, approach the tomb of your Redeemer, no more to lament his death, no more to embalm his ſacred body, which hath not been *ſuffered to ſee corruption*, Acts ii. 27. but to ſhout for joy at his reſurrection. To this the prophet inviteth us in the text: "The voice of rejoicing and ſal-

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vation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly."

I have not queſtioned, whether the pſalm in general, and the text in particular, regard the Meſſiah. The ancient Jews underſtood the pſalm of him; and therefore made uſe of it formerly among their prayers for his advent. We agree with the Jews, and on this article, we think they are ſafer guides than many chriſtians. The whole pſalm agrees with Jeſus Chriſt, and is applicable to him as well as to David, particularly the famous words that follow the text: "The ſtone which the builders refuſed, is become the head-ſtone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes." Theſe words are ſo unanimouſly applied to the exaltation, and particularly to the reſurrection, of Jeſus Chriſt, in the books of the New Teſtament, in the goſpel of St. Matthew, in that of St. Mark, in that of St. Luke, in the book of Acts, in the epiſtle to the Romans, and in that to the Epheſians, that it ſeems needleſs, methinks, to attempt to prove a matter ſo fully decided.

The preſent ſolemnity demands reflections of another kind, and we will endeavour to ſhew you,

I. The truth of the event of which the text ſpeaks: *The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.*

II. We will juſtify the joyful acclamations, which are occaſioned by it: *The voice of rejoicing and ſalvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.*

I. Let us examine the evidences of the *truth* of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. Infidelity denies it, and what perhaps may be no leſs injurious to chriſtianity, ſuperſtition pretends to eſtabliſh it on falſehood and abſurdity. A certain

tain traveller* pretends, that the inhabitants of the holy land ſtill ſhew travellers *the ſtone which the builders refuſed*, and which became *the head-ſtone of the corner*. In order to guard you againſt infidelity, we will urge the arguments, which prove the truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt: but in order to prevent ſuperſtition, we will attribute to each argument no more evidence than what actually belongs to it.

In proof of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, we have, 1. Preſumption. 2. Proofs. 3. Demonſtrations. The circumſtances of his burial afford ſome preſumptions; the teſtimonies of the apoſtles furniſh us with ſome arguments; and the deſcent of the holy Spirit on the church furniſheth us with demonſtrations.

1. From the circumſtances of the burial of Jeſus Chriſt, I derive ſome *preſumptions* in favor of the doctrine of the reſurrection. Jeſus Chriſt died. This is an inconteſtible principle. Our enemies, far from pretending to queſtion this, charge it on chriſtianity as a reproach.

The tomb of Jeſus Chriſt was found empty a few days after his death. This is another inconteſtible principle. For if the enemies of chriſtianity had retained his body in their poſſeſſion, they would certainly have produced it for the ruin of the report of his reſurrection. Hence ariſeth a preſumption that Jeſus Chriſt roſe from the dead.

If the body of Jeſus Chriſt were not raiſed from the dead, it muſt have been ſtolen away. But this theft is incredible. Who committed it? The enemies of Jeſus Chriſt? Would they have contributed to his glory, by countenancing a report of his reſurrection? Would his diſciples?

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* Peter Belon. Obſerv. lib. ii. cap. 83. Belon was a countryman of our author's, a phyſician of Le Mans, who travelled from 1546 to 1549. His travels were publiſhed 1555.

It is probable, they would not: and, it is next to certain, they could not. How could they have undertaken to remove the body? Frail and timorous creatures, people, who fled as soon as they saw him taken into custody; even Peter, the most courageous, trembled at the voice of a servant girl, and three times denied that he knew him; people of this character, would they have dared to resist the authority of the governor? Would they have undertaken to oppose the determination of the Sanhedrim, to force a guard, and to elude, or to overcome, soldiers armed and aware of danger? If Jesus Christ were not risen again, (I speak the language of unbelievers) he had deceived his disciples with vain hopes of his resurrection. How came the disciples not to discover the imposture? Would they have hazarded themselves, by undertaking an enterprize so perilous, in favor of a man, who had so cruelly imposed on their credulity?

But were we to grant that they formed the design of removing the body, how could they have executed it? How could soldiers, armed, and on guard, suffer themselves to be overreached by a few timorous people? "Either," says St. Augustine,* "they were asleep, or awake: If they were awake, why should they suffer the body to be taken away? If asleep, how could they know that the disciples took it away? How dare they then depose that it was stolen?" All these, however, are only presumptions.

The testimony of the apostles furnisheth us with *arguments*, and there are eight considerations, which give their evidence sufficient weight. Remark the *nature*, and the *number*, of the witnesses: The *fact* they avow, and the *agreement* of their evidence: The *tribunals*, before which they stood, and the *time*, in which they made

* Serm. ii. in Psal. xxxvi.

made their depositions: The *place*, where they affirmed the resurrection, and their *motives* for doing so.

1. Consider *the nature of these witnesses.* Had they been men of opulence and credit in the world, we might have thought, that their reputation gave a run to the fable. Had they been learned and eloquent men, we might have imagined, that the style, in which they told the tale, had soothed the souls of the people into a belief of it. But, for my part, when I consider that the apostles were the lowest of mankind, without reputation to impose on people, without authority to compel, and without riches to reward: when I consider, that they were mean, rough, unlearned men, and consequently very unequal to the task of putting a cheat upon others; I cannot conceive, that people of this character could succeed in deceiving the whole church.

2. Consider *the number of these witnesses.* St. Paul enumerates them, and tells us, that Jesus Christ *was seen of Cephas*, 1 Cor. xv. 5, &c. This appearance is related by St. Luke, who saith, *the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*, chap. xxiv. 34. The apostle adds, *then* he was seen *of the twelve:* This is related by St Mark, who saith, *he appeared unto the eleven*, chap. xvi. 14. It was the same appearance, for the apostles retained the appellation *twelve*, although, after Judas had been guilty of suicide, they were reduced to *eleven*. St. Paul adds further, *after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once:* Jesus Christ promised this appearance to the women, "Go into Galilee, and tell my brethren, that they shall see me there," Matt. xxviii. 10. St. Luke tells us in the first chapter of Acts, that the church consisted of *about an hundred and twenty* members; this was the church at Jerusalem: but the greatest part

of

of the *five hundred*, of whom St. Paul ſpeaks, were of Galilee, where Jeſus Chriſt had preached his goſpel, and where theſe converts abode after his reſurrection. The apoſtle ſubjoins, *after that he was ſeen of James;* this appearance is not related by the evangeliſts: but St. Paul knew it by tradition.* St. Jerom writes, that in a Hebrew goſpel, attributed to St. Matthew, called *The Goſpel of the Nazarenes*, it was ſaid, *Jeſus Chriſt appeared to St. James;* that, this apoſtle having made a vow, neither to eat nor drink till Jeſus ſhould riſe from the dead, the divine Saviour took bread and broke it, took wine and poured it out, and ſaid to him, *Eat and drink, for the ſon of man is riſen from the dead.*† St. Paul yet adds

* Two of our Lord's apoſtles were named *James*. The *elder* of the two, brother of John, was put to death by Herod, Acts xii. 2. The other, who was firſt couſin to Jeſus Chriſt, was called the *leſs*, the *younger* probably, and lived many years after. It is not certain which of the two St. Paul means. If he mean the *firſt*, he had the account of the appearing of the Lord to him, probably, as Mr. Saurin ſays, *by tradition*: If the *laſt*, it is likely, he had it from James himſelf; for him he *ſaw* at Jeruſalem, Gal. i. 19. and he was living in the year 57, when St. Paul wrote this firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians.

† The goſpel, of which Mr. Saurin, after St. Jerom, ſpeaks, is now loſt. It was probably one of thoſe mangled, interpolated copies of the true goſpel of St. Matthew, which, through the avidity of the lower ſort of people to know the hiſtory of Jeſus Chriſt, had been tranſcribed, and debaſed, and was handed about the world. I call it *mangled*: becauſe ſome parts of the *true* goſpel were *omitted*. I call it *interpolated*: becauſe *ſome* things were *added from other goſpels*, as the hiſtory of the woman caught in adultery, from St. John; Euſeb. Eccl. hiſt. lib. iii cap. 39. and *others from report*, as the above paſſage relative to James, &c. This book was written in Syriac, with Hebrew characters, St. Jerom tranſlated it into Greek, and Latin, and divers of the fathers quote it, as Hegeſippus, *Euſeb. E. H. lib.* iv. 22. Ignatius Ep. and Smyrnenſes,

adds further, "Then he was ſeen of all the apoſtles; and, laſt of all, of me alſo, as of one born out of due time." So numerous were the witneſſes of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt! from this fact we derive a ſecond argument; for, had the witneſſes been few, it might have been ſaid, that the baſe deſign of deceiving the whole church was formed by one, and propagated by a few more; or that ſome one had fancied he ſaw Jeſus Chriſt: but when St. Paul, when the reſt of the apoſtles, when *five hundred brethren* atteſt the truth of the fact; what room remains for ſuſpicion and doubt?

3. Obſerve *the facts themſelves, which they avow*, Had they been metaphyſical reaſonings, depending on a chain of principles and conſequences; had they been periods of chronology, depending on long and difficult calculations; had they been diſtant events, which could only have been known by the relations of others; their reaſonings might have been ſuſpected: But they are facts, which are in queſtion, facts, which, the witneſſes declared, they had ſeen with their own eyes at divers places, and at ſeveral times. Had they ſeen Jeſus Chriſt? Had they touched him? Had they ſitten at table, and eaten with him? Had they converſed with him? All theſe are queſtions of fact: it was impoſſible they could be deceived in them.

4. Remark *the agreement of their evidence.* They all unanimouſly depoſed, that Jeſus Chriſt roſe from the dead. It is very extraordinary, that a gang of five hundred impoſtors, (I ſpeak the language of infidels) a company, in which

Edit. Uſerii, p. 112. Clement of Alexandria, Stromat. lib. ii. p. 278, Edit. Lugdun. 1616. Origen, St. Jerom, &c. It went by the names of the goſpel according to St. Matthew, the goſpel according to the Hebrews, the goſpel of the twelve apoſtles, the goſpel of the Nazarenes. See Luke i. 1, 2.

there must needs be people of different capacities and tempers, the witty and the dull, the timid and the bold; it is very strange, that such a numerous body as this should maintain an unity of evidence. This, however, is the case of our witnesses. What christian ever contradicted himself? What christian ever impeached his accomplices? What christian ever discovered this pretended imposture?

5. Observe *the tribunals, before which they gave evidence*, and the innumerable multitude of people by whom their testimony was examined, by Jews and Heathens, by philosophers and Rabbies, and by an infinite number of people, who went annually to Jerusalem: For, my brethren, Providence so ordered these circumstances, that the testimony of the apostles might be unsuspected. Providence continued Jerusalem forty years after the resurrection of our Lord, that all the Jews in the world might examine the evidence concerning it, and obtain authentic proof of the truth of christianity. I repeat it again, then, the apostles maintained the resurrection of Jesus Christ before Jews, before Pagans, before philosophers, before Rabbies, before courtiers, before lawyers, before people expert in examining, and in cross-examining witnesses, in order to lead them into self-contradiction. Had the apostles borne their testimony in consequence of a preconcerted plot between themselves, is it not morally certain, that, as they were examined before such different and capable men, some one would have discovered the pretended fraud?

6. Consider *the place, in which the apostles bore their testimony.* Had they published the resurrection of the Saviour of the world in distant countries, beyond mountains and seas, it might have been supposed, that distance of place, rendering it extremely difficult for their hearers to obtain exact information, had facilitated the establishment

tabliſhment of the error: But the apoſtles preached in Jeruſalem, in the ſynagogues, in the pretorium; they unfolded and diſplayed the banners of their maſter's croſs, and ſet up tokens of his victory, on the very ſpot, on which the infamous inſtrument of his ſufferings had been ſet up.

7. Obſerve *the time of this teſtimony.* Had the apoſtles firſt publiſhed this reſurrection ſeveral years after the epocha, which they aſſigned for it; unbelief might have availed itſelf of the delay: but three days after the death of Jeſus Chriſt, they ſaid, he was riſen again, and they re-echoed their teſtimony in a ſingular manner at Pentecoſt, when Jeruſalem expected the ſpread of the report, and endeavored to prevent it; while the eyes of their enemies were yet ſparkling with rage and madneſs; and while Calvary was yet dyed with the blood they had ſpilt there. Do impoſtors take ſuch meaſures? Would not they have waited till the fury of the Jews had been appeaſed, till judges, and public officers, had been changed, and till people had been leſs attentive to their depoſitions?

8. Conſider, laſtly, *the motives, which induced the apoſtles to publiſh the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.* Survey the face of the world, examine all the impoſtures, that are practiſed in ſociety. Falſehood, impoſition, treachery, perjury, abound in ſociety. To every different trade and profeſſion ſome peculiar deceptions belong. However, all mankind have one deſign in deceiving, they all deceive for their own intereſt. Their intereſts are infinitely diverſified; but it is intereſt, however, that always animates all deceivers. There is one intereſt of pride, another of pleaſure, a third of profit. In the caſe before us the nature of things is ſubverted, and all our notions of the human heart contradicted. It muſt be pre-ſuppoſed, that, whereas other men gener-

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ally ſacrifice the intereſt of their ſalvation to their temporal intereſt, the apoſtles, on the contrary, ſacrificed their temporal intereſt without any inducement from the intereſt of ſalvation itſelf. Suppoſe, they had been craftily led, during the life of Jeſus Chriſt, into the expectation of ſome temporal advantages, how came it to paſs, that, after they ſaw their hopes blaſted, and themſelves threatened with the moſt rigorous puniſhments, they did not redeem their lives by confeſſing the impoſture? In general, the more wicked a traitor is, the more he trembles, alters, and confeſſes, at the approach of death. Having betrayed, for his own intereſt, the laws of his country, the intereſts of ſociety, the confidence of his prince, and the credit of religion, he betrays the companions of his impoſture, the accomplices of his crimes. Here, on the contrary, the apoſtles perſiſt in their teſtimony till death, and ſign the truths they have publiſhed with the laſt drops of their blood. Theſe are our arguments.

We proceed now to our *demonſtrations*, that is, to the miracles, with which the apoſtles ſealed the truth of their teſtimony. Imagine theſe venerable men addreſſing their adverſaries on the day of the chriſtian penteceſt in this language. "You refuſe to believe us on our depoſitions; five hundred of us, you think, are enthuſiaſts, all infected with the ſame malady, who have carried our abſurdity ſo far as to imagine that we have ſeen a man, whom we have not ſeen; eaten with a man, with whom we have not eaten; converſed with a man, with whom we have not converſed: or perhaps you think us impoſtors, or take us for mad men, who intend to ſuffer ourſelves to be impriſoned, and tortured, and crucified, for the ſake of enjoying the pleaſure of deceiving mankind, by prevailing upon them to believe a fanciful reſurrection: you think we are ſo ſtupid as to act a part ſo extravagant. But

bring

bring out your ſick; preſent your demoniacs; fetch hither your dead. Confront us with Medes, Parthians, and Elamites; let Cappadocia, Pontus, Aſia, Egypt, Phrygia, Pamphylia, let all nations and people ſend us ſome of their inhabitants, we will reſtore hearing to the deaf, and ſight to the blind, we will make the lame walk, we will caſt out devils, and raiſe the dead. We, we publicans, we illiterate men, we tent makers, we fiſhermen, we will diſcourſe with all the people of the world in their own languages. We will explain prophecies, elucidate the moſt obſcure predictions, develope the moſt ſublime myſteries, teach you notions of God, precepts for the conduct of life, plans of morality and religion, more extenſive, more ſublime, and more advantageous, than thoſe of your prieſts and philoſophers, yea than thoſe of Moſes himſelf. We will do more ſtill. We will communicate theſe gifts to you, *the word of wiſdom, the word of knowledge, faith, the gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, diſcerning of ſpirits, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues*, 1 Cor. xii. 8, &c. all theſe ſhall be communicated to you by your miniſtry."

All theſe things the apoſtles profeſſed; all theſe proofs they gave of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt; "this Jeſus hath God raiſed up; and he hath ſhed forth this, which ye now ſee and hear," Acts ii. 32, 33. This conſideration furniſheth us with an anſwer to the greateſt objection, that was ever made to the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, and, in general, to his whole economy. "How is it," ſay unbelievers ſometimes, "that your Jeſus expoſed all the circumſtances of his abaſement to the public eye, and concealed thoſe of his elevation? If he were tranſfigured on the mount, it was only before Peter, James, and John. If he aſcended to heaven, none but his diſciples ſaw his aſcent. If he roſe again from

the dead, and appeared, he appeared only to thoſe, who were intereſted in his fame. Why did he not ſhew himſelf to the ſynagogue? Why did he not appear to Pilate? Why did he not ſhew himſelf alive in the ſtreets, and public aſſemblies, of Jeruſalem? Had he done ſo, infidelity would have been eradicated, and every one would have believed his own eyes: but the ſecrecy of all theſe events expoſeth them to very juſt ſuſpicions, and giveth plauſible pretexts to errors, if errors they be."

We omit many ſolid anſwers to this objection; perhaps we may urge them on future occaſions, and at preſent we content ourſelves with obſerving, that the apoſtles, who atteſted the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, wrought miracles in the preſence of all thoſe, before whom, you ſay, Jeſus Chriſt ought to have produced himſelf after his reſurrection. The apoſtles wrought miracles; behold Jeſus Chriſt! ſee his Spirit! behold his reſurrection! "God hath raiſed up Jeſus Chriſt, and he hath ſhed forth what ye now ſee and hear." This way of proving the reſurrection of Chriſt was as convincing as the ſhewing of himſelf to each of his enemies would have been; as the expoſure of his wounds before them, or the permitting of them to thruſt their hands into his ſide, would have been. Yea, this was a more convincing way, than that would have been, for which you plead. Had Jeſus Chriſt ſhewn himſelf, they might have thought him a phantom, or a counterfeit; they might have ſuppoſed, that a reſemblance of features had occaſioned an illuſion: but what could an unbeliever oppoſe againſt the healing of the ſick, the raiſing of the dead, the expulſion of devils, the alteration and ſubverſion of all nature?

It may be ſaid, perhaps, all theſe proofs, if indeed they ever exiſted, were concluſive to them, who, it is pretended, ſaw the miracles of the

apoſtles;

apoſtles; but they can have no weight with us, who live ſeventeen centuries after them. We reply, The miracles of the apoſtles cannot be doubted without giving into an univerſal ſcepticiſm; without eſtabliſhing this unwarrantable principle, that we ought to believe nothing but what we ſee; and without taxing three ſorts of people, equally unſuſpected, with extravagance on this occaſion.

1. They, who call themſelves *the operators of these miracles*, would be chargeable with extravagance. If they wrought none, they were impoſtors, who endeavored to deceive mankind. If they were impoſtors of the leaſt degree of common ſenſe, they would have uſed ſome precautions to conceal their impoſture. But ſee how they relate the facts, of the truth of which we pretend no doubt. They ſpecify times, places, and circumſtances. They ſay, ſuch and ſuch facts paſſed in ſuch cities, ſuch public places, ſuch aſſemblies, in ſight of ſuch and ſuch people. Thus St. Paul writes to the Corinthians. He directs to a ſociety of chriſtians in the city of Corinth. He tells them, that they had received miraculous gifts, and cenſures them for making a parade of them. He reproves them for ſtriving to diſplay, each his own gifts in their public aſſemblies. He gives them ſome rules for the regulation of their conduct in this caſe. "If any man ſpeak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the moſt by three, and that by courſe, and let one interpret. If there be no interpreter, let him keep ſilence in the church. Let the prophets ſpeak, two, or three. If any thing be revealed to another that ſitteth by, let the firſt hold his peace," 1 Cor. xiv. 27, 28, &c. I aſk, with what face could St. Paul have written in this manner to the Corinthians, if all theſe facts had been falſe? If the Corinthians had received neither *the gifts of prophecy*, nor the

diſcerning

discerning of spirits, nor *divers kinds of tongues*, What a front had he, who wrote in this manner?

2. *The enemies of Christianity* muſt be taxed with extravagance. Since chriſtians gloried in the ſhining miracles, that their preachers wrought; and ſince their preachers gloried in performing them before whole aſſemblies, it would have been very eaſy to diſcover their impoſture, had they been impoſtors. Suppoſe a modern impoſtor, preaching a new religion, and pretending to the glory of confirming it by notable miracles, wrought in this place: What method ſhould we take to refute him? Should we affirm that miracles do not prove the truth of a doctrine? Should we have recourſe to miracles wrought by others? Should we not exclaim againſt the fraud? Should we not appeal to our own eyes? Should we want any thing more than the diſſembler's own profeſſions to convict him of impoſture? Why did not the avowed enemies of chriſtianity, who endeavored by their publications to refute it, take theſe methods? How was it, that Celſus, Porphyry, Zoſimus, Julian the apoſtate, and Hierocles, the greateſt antagoniſts, that chriſtianity ever had, and whoſe writings are in our hands, never denied the facts: but, allowing the principle, turned all the points of their arguments againſt the conſequences, that chriſtians inferred from them? By ſuppoſing the falſehood of the miracles of the apoſtles, do we not tax the enemies of chriſtianity with abſurdity?

In fine, This ſuppoſition chargeth *the whole multitude of chriſtians, who embraced the goſpel*, with extravagance. The examination of the truth of religion, now, depends on a chain of principles and conſequences, which require a profound attention: and, therefore, the number of thoſe, who profeſs ſuch or ſuch a religion, cannot

not demonſtrate the truth of their religion. But in the days of the apoſtles the whole depended on a few plain facts. Hath Jeſus Chriſt communicated his Spirit to his apoſtles? Do the apoſtles work miracles? Have they the power of imparting miraculous gifts to thoſe, who embrace their doctrine? And yet this religion, the diſcuſſion of which was ſo plain and eaſy, ſpread itſelf far and wide. If the apoſtles did not work miracles, one of theſe two ſuppoſitions muſt be made: either theſe proſelytes did not deign to open their eyes, but ſacrificed their prejudices, paſſions, educations, eaſe, fortunes, lives, and conſciences, without condeſcending to ſpend one moment on the examination of this queſtion: Do the apoſtles work miracles? or that, on ſuppoſition they did open their eyes, and did find the falſehood of theſe pretended miracles, they yet ſacrificed their prejudices, and their paſſions, their educations, their eaſe, and their honor, their properties, their conſciences, and their lives, to a religion, which wholly turned on this falſe principle, that its miracles were true.

Collect all theſe proofs together, my brethren, conſider them in one point of view, and ſee how many extravagant ſuppoſitions muſt be advanced, if the reſurrection of our Saviour be denied. It muſt be ſuppoſed, that guards, who had been particularly cautioned by their officers, ſat down to ſleep, and that, however they deſerved credit when they ſaid the body of Jeſus Chriſt was ſtolen: it muſt be ſuppoſed, that men who had been impoſed on in the moſt odious and cruel manner in the world, hazarded their deareſt enjoyments for the glory of an impoſtor. It muſt be ſuppoſed, that ignorant and illiterate men, who had neither reputation, fortune, nor eloquence, poſſeſſed the art of faſcinating the eyes of all the church. It muſt be ſuppoſed, either that five hundred perſons were all deprived of their ſenſes at a time;

or

or that they were all deceived in the plaineſt matters of fact; or that this multitude of falſe witneſſes had found out the ſecret of never contradicting themſelves, or one another; and of being always uniform in their teſtimony. It muſt be ſuppoſed, that the moſt expert courts of judicature could not find out a ſhadow of contradiction in a palpable impoſture. It muſt be ſuppoſed, that the apoſtles, ſenſible men in other caſes, choſe preciſely thoſe places, and thoſe times which were the moſt unfavorable to their views. It muſt be ſuppoſed, that millions madly ſuffered impriſonments, tortures, and crucifixions, to ſpread an illuſion. It muſt be ſuppoſed, that ten thouſand miracles were wrought in favor of falſehood: or all theſe facts muſt be denied, and then it muſt be ſuppoſed, that the apoſtles were idiots, that the enemies of chriſtianity were idiots, and that all the primitive chriſtians were idiots.

The arguments that perſuade us of the truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, are ſo clear and ſo concluſive, that if any difficulty remain, it ariſeth from the brightneſs of the evidence itſelf. Yes, I declare, if any thing has ſhaken my confidence in it, it hath ariſen from this conſideration. I could not conceive how a truth, atteſted by ſo many irreproachable witneſſes, and confirmed by ſo many notorious miracles, ſhould not make more proſelytes; how it could poſſibly be, that all the Jews, and all the heathens, did not yield to this evidence. But this difficulty ought not to weaken our faith. In the folly of mankind its ſolution lies. Men are capable of any thing to gratify their paſſions, and to defend their prejudices. The unbelief of the Jews and heathens is not more wonderful than a hundred other phenomena, which, were we not to behold them every day, would equally alarm us. It is not more ſurpriſing than the ſuperſtitious veneration, in which, for many ages, the chriſ-

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ian world held that dark, confused, pagan genius, Aristotle; a veneration, which was carried so far, that when metaphysical questions were disputed in the schools, questions on which every one ought always to have liberty to speak his opinion; when they were examining whether there were a void in nature, whether nature abhorred a vacuum, whether matter were divisible, whether there were atoms, properly so called; when it could be proved, in disputes of this kind, that Aristotle was of such or such an opinion, his infallibility was allowed, and the dispute was at end. The unbelief of the ancients is not more surprising than the credulity of the moderns: We see kings, and princes, and a great part of christendom, submit to a pope, yea to an inferior priest, often to one who is void of both sense and grace. It is not more astonishing than the implicit faith of christians, who believe, in an enlightened age, in the days of Descartes, Paschal, and Malbranche; what am I saying? Descartes, Paschal, and Malbranche themselves believe, that a piece of bread, which they reduce to a pulp with their teeth, which they taste, swallow, and digest, is the body of their Redeemer. The ancient unbelief is not more wonderful than yours, protestants! You profess to believe there is a judgment, and a hell, and to know that misers, adulterers, and drunkards, must suffer everlasting punishments there, and although you cannot be ignorant of your being in this fatal list, yet you are as easy about futurity, as if you had read your names in the book of life, and had no reason to entertain the least doubt of your salvation.

II. We have urged the arguments, that prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ: I shall detain you only a few moments longer in justifying the joyful acclamations which it produced, "The voice of rejoicing and salvation, is in the taber-

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nacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly."

The three melancholy days that passed between the death of Jesus Christ and his resurrection, were days of triumph for the enemies of the church. Jesus Christ riseth again; and the church triumphs in its turn: "The voice of rejoicing and salvation, is in the tabernacles of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord doth valiantly."

1. In those melancholy days, *heresy triumphed over truth.* The greatest objection that was made against the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, was taken from his innocence, which is the foundation of it. For if Jesus Christ were innocent, where was divine justice when he was overwhelmed with sufferings, and put to death? Where was it, when he was exposed to the unbridled rage of the populace? This difficulty seems at first indissoluble. Yea, rather let all the guilty perish; rather let all the posterity of Adam be plunged into hell; rather let divine justice destroy every creature that divine goodness hath made, than leave so many virtues, so much benevolence, and so much fervour, humility so profound, and zeal so great, without indemnity and reward. But when we see that Jesus Christ, by suffering death, disarmed it, by lying in the tomb took away its sting, by his crucifixion ascended to a throne, the difficulty is diminished, yea, it vanisheth away: "The voice of rejoicing and salvation, is in the tabernacles of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly." God and man are reconciled; divine justice is satisfied; henceforth we may go "boldly to the throne of grace. There is now no condemnation to them *which* are in Christ Jesus. Who shall lay any

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thing to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again," Heb. iv. 16. Rom. viii. 1, 32, 34.

2. In those mournful days *infidelity triumphed over faith.* At the sight of a deceased Jesus the infidel displayed his system by insulting him, who sacrificed his passions to his duty, and by saying, See, see, that pale motionless carcase: *Bless God and die!** *All events come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the clean and to the unclean; to him*

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* So the French bibles render the words, BLESS *God and die!* our translation hath it, CURSE *God and die.* Job, who best knew his wife, calls this a *foolish* saying; that is, a saying void of *humanity* and *religion:* for so the word foolish signifies in scripture. It was a cruel popular sarcasm, frequently cast by sceptics on those who persisted in the belief of a God, and of the perfection and excellence of his providence, even while he suffered them to sink under the most terrible calamities. "Your God is the God of universal nature! He regards the actions of men! He rewards virtue! He punishes vice! On these erroneous principles your adoration of him has been built. This was a pardonable folly in the time of your prosperity; but what an absurdity to persist in it now! If your present sufferings do not undeceive you, no future means can. Your mind is past information. Persevere! *Go on in your adoration till you die.*"

It may seem strange at first, that the same term should stand for two such opposite ideas as *blessing* and *cursing:* but a very plain and natural reason may be assigned for it. The Hebrew word originally signified *to bless,* (*benedicere*): and when applied to *God,* it meant *to bless,* that is, *to praise* God by *worshipping* him. The Talmudists say, that the religious honors which were paid to God, were of four sorts. The prostration of the whole body was one: The bowing of the head another: The bending of the upper part of the body towards the knees a third; and *genuflexion* the fourth. Megillæ fol. 22. 2. apud Buxtorff. Lex. In these ways was God *praised, worshipped,* or *blessed,* and the Hebrew word for blessing was naturally put

that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath, Eccles. ix. 2.

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For *genuflexion*, the *expression* of blessing, or praising: thus it is rendered Psalm xcv. 6. let us *kneel* before the Lord: 2 Chron. vi. 13. Solomon *kneeled* down upon his knees. The bending of the knee being a usual *token of respect*, which people paid *to one another*, when they met, the word was transferred to this also, and is properly *salute*: 2 Kings iv. 19. If thou meet any man *salute* him not. The same token of respect being parting, the word was also applied to that: They *blessed* Rebekah, that is, *they bade her farewell*, accompanying their good wishes with *genuflexion*. From this known meaning of the word, it was applied to a bending of the knee where no blessing could be intended; he made his camels *kneel down*, Gen. xxiv. 11. It was put sometimes for the respect, that was paid to a magistrate, Gen. xli. 43. and sometimes for the respect, which idolaters paid to false gods. But to *bow the knee* to an idol was to *deny the existence of God*, to renounce his *worship*, or, in the scripture style, to *curse* God, to *blaspheme* God, &c. *If I beheld the sun, or the moon, and my mouth hath kissed my hand, I should have denied the God, that is above*, Job xxxi. 26, 27, 28. Only the scope of the place, therefore, can determine the precise meaning of the word. The word must be rendered *curse*, *deny*, God, or *renounce his worship*, Job i. 5, 11. and it must be rendered *bless*, *acknowledge*, or *worship* him, in ver. 21. The Septuagint, after a long sarcastic paraphrase, supposed to have been spoken by Job's wife, renders the phrase *eipon ti rema pros Kurion kai teleuta*. To bring our meaning into a narrow compass. If an ancient Jew had seen a *dumb* man bend his knee in the *tabernacle*, or in the *temple*, he would have said he *blessed the* LORD. Had he seen him, bend his knee at *court*, in the presence of Solomon, he would have said he *blessed*, that is, he *saluted the* KING. And had he seen him bend his knee in a *house of Baal*, or in an *idolatrous grove*, he would have said, he *blessed an* IDOL; or, as the embracing of idolatry was the renouncing of the worship of the true God, he would have said, he *cursed* JEHOVAH. We have ventured this conjecture to prevent any prejudices *against the* English bible, that may arise from the seemingly uncertain meaning of some Hebrew words.

Jesus Christ riseth from the dead: "The voice of rejoicing and salvation, is in the tabernacles of the righteous." The system of the infidel sinks: "he errs, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God," Matt. xxii. 29.

3. In those dismal days, *tyranny triumphed over the perseverance of martyrs.* Innocence was oppressed, and the rewards of virtue seemed to be buried in the tomb of him, who, above all others, had devoted himself to it. Jesus Christ riseth again: "The voice of rejoicing and salvation, is in the tabernacles of the righteous." The designs of the enemies of innocence are all frustrated, and their attempts to disgrace purity serve only to exalt its glory, and to perpetuate its memory. Let the tyrants of the church, then, rage against us; let *the gates of hell*, Matt. xvi. 18. consult to destroy us; let the kings *of the earth*, more furious oftener than hell itself, *set themselves against the Lord and against his anointed*, Psal. ii. 2. let them set up gibbets, let them equip galleys, let them kindle fires to burn us, and prepare racks to torture us; they themselves, and all their cruel inventions, shall serve the purposes of the almighty God: The *Assyrian is* only *the rod of his anger*, Isa. x. 5. "Herod and Pilate do *only* what his hand and his counsel determined before to be done," Acts iv. 28. God knoweth how to restrain their fury, and to say to them, as he saith to the ocean, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," Job xxxviii. 2.

4. Finally, in those fatal days, *death triumphed over all human hope of immortal glory.* The destiny of all believers is united to that of Jesus Christ. He had said to his disciples, *because I live, ye shall live also*, John xiv. 19. In like manner, on the same principle, we may say, If he be dead, we are dead also. And how could

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we have hoped to live, if he who is our life, had not freed himself from the ſtate of the dead? Jeſus Chriſt riſeth from the dead. "The voice of rejoicing is in the tabernacles of the righteous." Nature is re-inſtated in its primæval dignity; *death is ſwallowed up in victory*, I Cor. xv. 54. the grave is diſarmed of its ſting. Let my eye-ſight decay; let my body bow under the weight of old age; let the organs of my body ceaſe to perform their wonted operations; let all my ſenſes fail; let death ſweep away the dear relatives *of* my *bosom*, and my *friends*, *who are as mine own ſoul*, Deut. xiii. 6. let theſe eyes, guſhing with tears, attended with ſobs, and ſorrows, and groans, behold her expire, who was my company in ſolitude, my counſel in difficulty, my comfort in diſgrace; let me follow to the grave the bones, the carcaſe, the precious remains of this dear part of myſelf; my converſe is ſuſpended, but is not deſtroyed; "Lazarus my friend, ſleepeth, but if I believe, I ſhall ſee the glory of God." Jeſus Chriſt is *the reſurrection and the life*, John xi. 2, 40, 25. He is riſen from the dead, we therefore ſhall one day riſe. Jeſus Chriſt is not a private perſon, he is a public repreſentative, he is the ſurety of the church, "the firſt fruits of them that ſleep. If the ſpirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," I Cor. xv. 20. Rom. viii. 2.

Was ever joy more rational? Was triumph ever more glorious? The triumphant entries of conquerors, the ſongs that rend the air in praiſe of their victories, the pyramids on which their exploits are tranſmitted to poſterity, when they have ſubdued a general, routed an army, humbled the pride, and repreſſed the rage of a foe; *ought not all* theſe to yield to the joys that are occaſioned

occasioned by the event which we celebrate to-day? Ought not all these to yield to the victories of our incomparable Lord, and to his people's expressions of praise? One part of the gratitude, which is due to beneficial events, is to know their value, and to be affected with the benefits which they procure.

Let us celebrate the praise of the author of our redemption, my brethren; let us call heaven and earth to witness our gratitude. Let an increase of zeal accompany this part of our engagements. Let a double portion of fire from heaven kindle our sacrifice; and with a heart penetrated with the liveliest gratitude, and with the most ardent love, let each christian exclaim, "Blessed be the God, and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," 1 Pet. i. 3. Let him join his voice to that of angels, and, in concert with the celestial intelligences, let him sing, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory," Isa. vi. 3. Let *the tabernacles of the righteous* resound with the text, *the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly; the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.*

But what melancholy thoughts are these, which interrupt the pleasures of this day? Whose *tabernacles* are these? The tabernacles of *the righteous?* Ah! my brethren! woe be to you, if, under pretence that *the righteous* ought to rejoice to-day, you rejoice by adding sin to sin! The resurrection of the Saviour of the world, perfectly asserts with the other parts of his economy. It is a spring flowing with motives of holiness. God has left nothing undone in the work of your salvation. The great work is finished. Jesus Christ completed it, when he rose from the tomb. The Son hath paid the ran-

ſon. The Father hath accepted it. The holy Spirit hath publiſhed it, and by innumerable prodigies hath confirmed it. None but yourſelves can condemn you. Nothing can deprive you of this grace, but your own contempt of it.

But the more precious this grace is, the more criminal, and the more affronting to God, will your contempt of it be. The more joy, with which the glory of a riſen Jeſus ought to inſpire you, if you believe in him, the more terror ought you to feel, if you attempt to diſobey him. He, who "declared him the ſon of God, with power by the reſurrection from the dead, *put* a ſceptre of iron into his hand, that he might break his enemies, and daſh them in pieces like a potter's veſſel," Rom. i. 4. Pſal. ii. 9. Doſt thou enter into theſe reflections? Doſt thou approach the table of Jeſus Chriſt with determinations to live a new life? I believe ſo. But the grand fault of our communions, and ſolemn feſtivals, doth not lie in the preciſe time of our communions and ſolemnities. The repreſentation of Jeſus Chriſt in the Lord's ſupper; certain reflections that move conſcience; an extraordinary attention to the nobleſt object in religion; the ſolemnities that belong to our public feſtivals; inſpire us with a kind of devotion: but how often does this devotion vaniſh with the objects that produced it? Theſe auguſt ſymbols ſhould follow thee into thy warfare in the world. A voice ſhould ſound in thine ears amidſt the tumult of the world; amidſt the diſſipating ſcenes that beſiege thy mind; amidſt the pleaſures that faſcinate thine eyes; amidſt the grandeur and glory which thou cauſeſt to blaze around thee, and with which thou thyſelf, although, alas! always mortal, always a worm of the earth, always duſt and aſhes, art the firſt to be dazzled; a voice ſhould ſound in thine ears, Remember thy vows, *remember* thine oaths, remember thy joys.

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My brethren, if you be not to-morrow, and till the next Lord's supper-day, what you are to-day, we recall all the congratulations, all the benedictions, and all the declarations of joy, which we have addreſſed to you. Inſtead of congratulating you on your happineſs in being permitted to approach God in your devotions, we will deplore your wickedneſs in adding perfidy and perjury to all your other crimes. Inſtead of benedictions and vows, we will cry, "Anathema, Maranatha; if any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be Anathema," 1 Cor. xvi. 22. If any man who hath kiſſed the Saviour betray him, *let him be Anathema.* If any man defile the myſteries of our holy religion, *let him be Anathema.* If any man "tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, let him be Anathema," Hebs x. 29. Inſtead of inviting thee to celebrate the *praiſe* of the author of our being, we forbid thee the practice, for it *is comely* only *for the upright,* Pſal. xxxiii. 1. *God,* by our miniſtry, *ſaith* to thee, Thou *wicked man! What haſt thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?* Pſal. l. 16. Why doth that mouth now bleſs my name, and then blaſpheme it? now praiſe me thy Creator, and then defame my creatures? now publiſh my goſpel, and then profane it?

If, on the contrary, you live agreeably to the engagements into which you have entered today; what a day, what a day, my brethren, is this day? A day in which you have performed the great work, for which God formed you, and which is all that deſerves the attention of an immortal ſoul. A day in which many impurities, many calumnies, many paſſionate actions, many perjuries, and many oaths have been buried in everlaſting ſilence. It is a day, in which you have been waſhed in the blood of the Lamb; in which you have entered into fellowſhip with God;

God; in which you have heard these triumphant shouts in the church, *Grace, grace unto it*, Zech. iv. 7. A day in which you have been *raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, Eph. ii. 6. A day, the pleasing remembrance of which will follow you to your death-bed, and will enable your pastors to open the gates of heaven to you, to commit your souls into the hands of the Redeemer who ransomed it, and say to you, Remember, on such a day your sins were effaced; remember, on such a day Jesus Christ disarmed death; remember, on such a day the gate of heaven was opened to you.

O day! which the Lord hath made, let me for ever rejoice in thy light! O day of designs, resolutions, and promises, may I never forget thee! O day of consolation and grace, may a rich effusion of the peace of God on this auditory, preserve thy memorial through a thousand generations!

Receive this peace, my dear brethren. I spread over you hands washed in the innocent blood of my Redeemer; and as our risen Lord Jesus Christ, when he appeared to his disciples, said to them, *Peace, peace be unto you*; so we, by his command, while we celebrate the memorable history of his resurrection, say to you, "Peace, peace be unto you. As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God," John xx. 19, 21. Gal. vi. 16. To him be honor and glory for ever.—Amen.

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

THE ABSURDITY OF LIBERTINISM AND INFIDELITY.

PSALM, xciv. 7, 8, 9, 10.

They say, The Lord shall not see: neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, ye most brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He, that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He, that formed the eye, shall he not see? He, that chastiseth the heathen, shall not be correct? He, that teacheth man knowledge, shall not be know?

INVECTIVE and reproach seldom proceed from the mouth of a man, who loves truth and defends it. They are the usual weapons of them, who plead a desperate cause; who feel themselves hurt by a formidable adversary; who have not the equity to yield, when they ought to yield; and who have no other part to take, than that of supplying the want of solid reasons by odious names.

Yet, whatever charity we may have for erroneous people, it is difficult to see, with moderation, men obstinately maintaining some errors, guiding their minds by the corruption of their hearts, and choosing rather to advance the most palpable absurdities, than to give the least check to the most irregular passions. Hear how the sacred authors treat people of this character. "My people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, they have no understanding. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not *know, my people* doth not consider. Ephraim is

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like a ſilly dove without heart. O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you," Jer. iv. 22. Iſa. i. 3. Hoſ. vii. 11. Matt. iii. 7. and Gal. iii. 1.

Not to multiply examples, let it ſuffice to remark, that, if ever there were men, who deſerved ſuch odious names, they are ſuch as our prophet deſcribes. Thoſe abominable men I mean, who, in order to violate the laws of religion without remorſe, maintain, that religion is a chimera; who break down all the bounds, which God hath ſet to the wickedneſs of mankind, and who determine to be obſtinate infidels, that they may be peaceable libertines. The prophet, therefore, lays aſide, in reſpect to them, that charity, which a weak mind would merit, that errs only through the misfortune of a bad education, or the ſtrait limits of a narrow capacity. "O ye moſt brutiſh among the people," ſays he to them, "underſtand. Ye fools, when will ye be wiſe?"

People of this ſort, I intend to attack to-day. Not that I promiſe myſelf much ſucceſs with them, or entertain hopes of reclaiming them. Theſe are the *fools*, of whom Solomon ſays, "though thou ſhouldeſt bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a peſtle, yet will not his fooliſhneſs depart from him," Prov. xxvii. 22. But I am endeavoring to prevent the progreſs of the evil, and to guard our youth againſt favorable impreſſions of infidelity and libertiniſm, which have already decoyed away too many of our young people, and to confirm you all in your attachment to your holy religion. Let us enter into the matter.

In the ſtyle of the ſacred authors, particularly in that of our prophet, to deny the exiſtence of a God, the doctrine of Providence, and the eſſential *difference* between juſt and unjuſt, is one and

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the ſame thing. Compare the pſalm, out of which I have taken my text, with the fourteenth, with the fifty-third, and particularly with the tenth, and you will perceive, that the prophet confounds them, who ſay *in their hearts, there is no God*, with thoſe, who ſay, *God hath forgotten; he hideth his face, he will never ſee it*, Pſal. x. 11.

In effect, although the laſt of theſe doctrines may be maintained without admitting the firſt, yet the laſt is no leſs eſſential to religion than the firſt. And although a man may be a deiſt, and an epicurean, without being an atheiſt, yet the ſyſtem of an atheiſt is no more odious to God than that of an epicurean, and that of a deiſt.

I ſhall, therefore, make but one man of theſe different men, and, after the example of the prophet, I ſhall attack him with the ſame arms. In order to juſtify the titles, that he gives an infidel, I ſhall attack,

I. His taſte.

II. His policy.

III. His indocility.

IV. His logics, or to ſpeak more properly, his way of reaſoning.

V. His morality.

VI. His conſcience.

VII. His politeneſs, and knowledge of the world.

In all theſe reflections, which I ſhall proportion to the length of theſe exerciſes, I ſhall pay more regard to the genius of our age than to that of the times of the prophet: and I ſhall do this the rather, becauſe we cannot determine on what occaſion the pſalm was compoſed, of which the text is a part.

I. If you conſider the *taſte*, the diſcernment and choice of the people, of whom the prophet ſpeaks, you will ſee, he had a great right to denominate them *moſt brutiſh* and *fooliſh*. What

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an excess must a man have attained, when he hates a religion, without which he cannot but be miserable! Who, of the happiest of mankind, doth not want the succour of religion? What disgraces at court! What mortifications in the army! What accidents in trade! What uncertainty in science! What bitterness in pleasure! What injuries in reputation! What inconstancy in riches! What disappointments in projects! What infidelity in friendship! What vicissitudes in fortune! Miserable man! What will support thee under so many calamities? What miserable comforters are the passions in these sad periods of life! How inadequate is philosophy itself, how improper is Zeno, how unequal are all his followers to the task of calming a poor mortal, when they tell him, "Misfortunes are inseparable from human nature. No man should think himself exempt from any thing, that belongs to the condition of mankind. If maladies be violent, they will be short; if they be long, they will be tolerable. A fatal necessity prevails over all mankind; complaints and regrets cannot change the order of things. A generous soul should be superior to all events, it should despise a tyrant, defy fortune, and render itself insensible to pain." Tolerable reflections in a book, plausible arguments in a public auditory! But weak reflections, vain arguments, in a bed of infirmity, while a man is suffering the pain of the gout, or the stone!

O! how necessary is religion to us in these fatal circumstances! It speaketh to us in a manner infinitely more proper to comfort us under our heaviest afflictions! Religion saith to you, "Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth evil and good," Lam. iii. 38. "He formeth light and createth darkness; he maketh peace, and createth evil," Isa. xlv. 7. "Shall

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there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos iii. 6. Religion tells you, that if God afflict you, it is for your own advantage; it is, that, being uneasy on earth, you may take your flight toward heaven; that "your light affliction, which is but for a moment, may work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17. Religion bids you "not to think it strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you," 1 Pet. iv. 12. but to believe, that "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold, which perisheth, will be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ," chap. i. 7.

But religion is above all necessary in the grand vicissitude, in the fatal point, to which all the steps of life tend, I mean, at the hour of death. For, at length, after we have rushed into all pleasures, after we have sung well, danced well, feasted well, we must die, we must die. And what, pray, except religion, can support a man, struggling with *the king of terrors*? Job xviii. 14. A man, who sees his grandeur abased, his fortune distributed, his connections dissolved, his senses benumbed, his grave dug, the world retiring from him, his bones hanging on the verge of the grave, and his soul divided, between the horrible hope of sinking into nothing, and the dreadful fear of falling into the hands of an angry God.

In sight of these formidable objects, fall, fall, ye bandages of infidelity, ye veils of obscurity and depravity! and let me perceive, how necessary religion is to man. It is that, which sweetens the bitterest of all bitters. It is that, which disarms the most invincible monster. It is that, which transformeth the most frightful of all objects into an object of gratitude and joy. It is that, which calms the conscience, and confirms

the soul. It is that, which presents to the dying believer another being, another life, another economy, other objects, and other hopes. It is that, which, "while the outward man perisheth, renewetb the inward man day by day," 2 Cor. iv. 16. It is that, which dissipates the horrors of *the valley of the shadow of death*, Psal. xxiii. 4. It is that, which cleaves the clouds in the sight of a departing Stephen; tells a converted thief, *to-day shalt thou be in paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43. and cries to all true penitents, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*, Rev. xiv. 13.

II. Having taken the unbelieving libertine on his own interest, I take him on the public interest, and, having attacked his taste, and discernment, I attack his *policy*. An infidel is a disturber of public peace, who, by undertaking to sap the foundations of religion, undermines those of society. *Society cannot subsist without religion*. If plausible objections may be formed against this proposition, it is because opponents have had the art of disguising it. To explain it, is to preclude the sophisms, which are objected against it. Permit us to lay down a few explanatory principles.

First. When we say, *Society cannot subsist without religion*, we do not comprehend in our proposition all the religions in the world. The proposition includes only those religions, which retain the fundamental principles, that constitute the base of virtue; as the immortality of the soul, a future judgment, a particular Providence. We readily grant, there may be in the world a religion worse than atheism: for example, any religion, that should command its votaries to kill, to assassinate, to betray. And, as we readily grant this truth to those, who take the pains to maintain it, so whatever they oppose to us, *taken from the religions of pagans, which were*

hurtful

hurtful to society, is only vain declamation, that proves nothing against us.

Secondly. When we affirm, *Society cannot subsist without religion*; we do not pretend, that religion, which retains articles false to society, may not so mix those articles with other principles pernicious to it, that they may seem at first sight worse than atheism. We affirm only, that, to take the whole of such a religion, it is more advantageous to society to have it, than to be destitute of it. All, therefore, that is objected against our proposition, concerning those wars, crusades, and persecutions, which were caused by superstition, all this is only vain sophistry, which doth not affect our thesis in the least.

Thirdly. When we say, *Society cannot subsist without religion*, we do not say, that religion, even the purest religion, may not cause some disorders in society: but we affirm only, that these disorders, however numerous, cannot counterbalance the benefits, which religion procures to it. So that all objections, taken from the troubles, which real or true may have produced in some circumstances, are only vain objections, that cannot weaken our proposition.

Fourthly. When we affirm, *Society cannot subsist without religion*, we do not affirm, that all the virtues, which are displayed in society, proceed from religious principles; so that all just magistrates are just for their love of equity; that all grave ecclesiastics are serious, because they respect their character; that all chaste women are chaste from a principle of love to virtue; human motives, we freely grant, often prevail instead of better. We affirm only, that religious principles are infinitely more proper to regulate society than human motives. Many persons, we maintain, do actually govern their conduct by religious principles, and society would

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be incomparably more irregular, were there no religion in it. That list of virtues, therefore, which only education and constitution produce, doth not at all affect the principle, which we are endeavouring to establish, and he, who takes his objections from it, doth but beat the air.

Lastly. When we affirm, *Society cannot subsist without religion*, we do not say, that all atheists and deists ought therefore to abandon themselves to all sorts of vices: nor that they, who have embraced atheism, if indeed there have been any such, were always the most wicked of mankind. Many people of these characters, we own, lived in a regular manner. We affirm only, that irreligion, of itself, openeth a door to all sorts of vices; and that men are so formed, that their disorders would increase, were they to disbelieve the doctrines of the existence of a God, of judgment, and of Providence. All the examples, therefore, that are alledged against us, of a Diagoras, of a Theodorus, of a Pliny, of a Vanini, of some societies, real, or chimerical, who, it is pretended, lived regular lives without the aid of religion; all these examples, I say, make nothing against our hypothesis.

These explanations being granted, we maintain, that no politician can succeed in a design of training men in one social body, without supposing the truth and reality of religion. For, if there be no religion, each member of society may do what he pleaseth; and then each would give a loose to his passions; each would employ his power in crushing the weak, his cunning in deceiving the simple, his eloquence in seducing the credulous, his credit in ruining commerce, his authority in distressing the whole with horror and terror, and carnage and blood. Frightful disorders in their nature: but necessary consequences of infidelity. For if you suppose, these disorders may be prevented, their preventives must

be

be attributed, either to private intereſt, to worldly honor, or to human laws.

But *private intereſt* cannot ſupply the place of religion. True, were all men to agree to obey the precepts of religion, each would find his own account in his own obedience. But it doth not depend on an individual to oppoſe a popular torrent, to reform the public, and to make a new world: and, while the world continues in its preſent ſtate, he will find a thouſand circumſtances, in which virtue is incompatible with private intereſt.

Nor can *worldly honor* ſupply the place of religion. For what is worldly honor? It is a ſuperficial virtue; an art, that one man poſſeſſeth, of diſguiſing himſelf from another; of deceiving politely; of appearing virtuous, rather than of being actually ſo. If you extend the limits of worldly honor further, if you make it conſiſt in that purity of conſcience, and in that rectitude of intention, which are in effect firm and ſolid foundations of virtue, you will find, either that this is only a fine idea of what almoſt nobody is capable of, or, if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, that the virtues, which compoſe your complex idea of worldly honor, are really branches of religion.

Finally. *Human laws* cannot ſupply the place of religion. To whatever degree of perfection they may be improved, they will always favour in three things of the imperfection of the legiſlators.

1. They will be *imperfect in their ſubſtance.* They may prohibit, indeed, enormous crimes: but they cannot reach refined irregularities, which are not the leſs capable of troubling ſociety for appearing leſs atrocious. They may forbid murder, theft, and adultery: but they can neither forbid avarice, anger, nor concupiſcence. They will fail in the preſerving and

disposing of property, they may command the payment of taxes to the crown, and of debts to the merchant; the cultivation of sciences, and liberal arts, but they cannot ordain patience, meekness, and love; and, you will grant, a society in which there is neither patience, meekness, nor love, must needs be an unhappy society.

2. Human laws will be *weak in their motives*. The rewards which they offer, may be forborne, for men may do without them; the punishments which they inflict, may be suffered; and there are some particular cases, in which they, who derogate from their authority, may advance their own interest more than if they constantly and scrupulously submit to it.

3. Human laws will be *restrained in their extent*. Kings, tyrants, masters of the world, know the art of freeing themselves from them. The laws avenge us on an insignificant thief, whom the pain of hunger and the fear of death tempted to break open our houses, to rob us of a trifling sum: but who will avenge us of magnificent thieves? For, my brethren, some men, in courts, cabinets, in dedicatory epistles, in the sermons of flatterers, and in the prologues of poets, are called conquerors, heroes, demi-gods; but in this pulpit, in this church, in the presence of the God, who filleth this house, and who regardeth not the appearances of men, you conquerors, you heroes, you demi-gods, are often nothing but thieves and incendiaries. Who shall avenge us of those men, who, at the head of a hundred thousand slaves, ravage the whole world, pillage on the right hand and on the left, violate the most sacred rights, and overwhelm society with injustice and oppression? Who doth not perceive the insufficiency of human laws on this article, and the absolute necessity of religion?

III. The

VII. The infidel exhibits an imbecility to the utmost degree of extravagance, by undertaking alone to oppose all mankind, and by audaciously preferring his own judgment above that of the whole world, who, excepting a small number, have unanimously embraced the truths which he rejects.

This argument, taken from unanimous consent, furnisheth in favor of religion, either a bare presumption, or a real demonstration, according to the different faces, under which it is presented.

It furnisheth a proof, perhaps more than presumptive, when it is opposed to the objections which an unbelieving philosopher alledgeth against religion. For, although the faith of a rational man ought not to be founded on a plurality of suffrages, yet unanimity of opinion is respectable, when it bears three characters. 1. *When an opinion prevails in all places.* Prejudice varies with climates, and whatever depends on human caprice, differs in France, and in Spain, in Europe, and in Asia, according as the inhabitants of each country have their blood hot or cold, their imagination strong or weak. 2. *When an opinion prevails at all times.* Prejudices change with the times; years instruct, and experience corrects errors, which ages have rendered venerable. 3. *When an opinion is contrary to the passions of men.* A prejudice, that controuls human passions, cannot be of any long duration. The interest that a man hath in discovering his mistake, will put him on using all his endeavors to develope a delusion. These three characters agree to truth only.

I am aware, that some pretend to enervate this argument by the testimonies of some ancient historians, and by the relations of some modern travellers, who tell us of some individuals, and of some whole societies, who are

destitute of the knowledge of God, and of religion.

But, in order to a solid reply, we arrange these atheists, and deists, who are opposed to us, in three different classes. The first consists of philosophers, the next of the senseless populace, and the last of profligate persons. *Philosophers*, if you attend closely to the matter, will appear, at least the greatest part of them will appear, to have been accused of having no religion, only because they had a purer religion than the rest of their fellow citizens. They would not admit a plurality of gods, they were, therefore, accused of believing no God. The infidelity of *the senseless populace*, is reasonable to our argument. We allow, wherever there is a spark of reason, there is also a spark of religion. Is it astonishing that they, who have renounced the former, should renounce the latter also? As to *the profligate*, who extinguish their own little light, we say of them, with a modern writer, *It is glorious to religion to have enemies of this character.*

But let us see, whether this unanimous consent, which hath afforded us a presumption in favor of religion, will furnish us with a demonstration against those who oppose it.

Authority ought never to prevail over our minds against a judgment, grounded on solid reasons, and received on a cool examination. But authority, especially an authority founded on unanimity of sentiments, ought always to sway our minds in regard to a judgment formed without solid reasons, without examination, and without discussion. No men deserve to be called the most *foolish*, and the *most brutish** among the people,

* Mr. Saurin follows the reading of the French version, les *plus* brutaux, *most* brutish. This is perfectly agreeable to the original, for the Hebrew forms the *superlative* degree by prefixing the letter beth to a *noun-substantive*, which follows an adjective, as here,

people, ſo much as thoſe men, who, being as the greateſt number of infidels are, without ſtudy, and without knowledge; who, without deigning to weigh, and even without condeſcending to hear the reaſons, on which all the men in the world, except a few, found the doctrine of the exiſtence of God, and of Providence, give themſelves an air of infidelity, and inſolently ſay; Mercury Triſmegiſtus, Zoroaſter, Pythagoras, Ariſtotle, Socrates, Plato, Seneca; moreover, Moſes, Solomon, Paul, and the apoſtles taught ſuch and ſuch doctrines; but, for my part, I am not of their opinion. And on what ground, pray, do you reject the doctrines, which have been defended by ſuch illuſtrious men? Do you know, that, of all characters, there is not one ſo difficult to ſuſtain, as that, which you affect? For, as you deny the moſt common notions, the cleareſt truths, ſentiments which are the moſt generally received, if you would maintain an appearance of propriety of character, you muſt be a ſuperior genius. You muſt make profound reſearches, digeſt immenſe volumes, and diſcuſs many an abſtract queſtion. You muſt learn the art of evading demonſtrations, of palliating ſophiſms, of parrying ten thouſand thruſts, that from all parts will be taken at you. But you, contemptible genius! you idiot! you, who hardly know how to arrange two words without offending againſt the rules of grammar, or to aſſociate two ideas without ſhocking common ſenſe, how do you expect to ſuſtain a character, which the greateſt geniuſes are incapable of ſupporting?

IV. Yet, as no man is ſo unreaſonable as not to profeſs to reaſon; and as no man takes up a notion

Cant. 1. 8. Prov. xxx. 30. *hominum brutiſſimi; hominum ſtupidiſſimi; totius hujus populi ſtupidiſſimi*; ſay commentators.

notion so eagerly, as not to pique himself on having taken it up after a mature deliberation; we must talk to the infidel as to a philosopher, who always follows the dictates of reason, and argues by principles and consequences. Well then! let us examine *his logic*, or, as I said before, *his way of reasoning*; his way of reasoning, you will see, is his brutality, and his logic consistent his extravagance.

In order to comprehend this, weigh, in the most exact and equitable balance, the argument of our prophet. "He, that planted the ear shall he not hear? He, that formed the eye shall he not see? He, that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? He, that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" These are, in brief, three sources of evidence, which supply the whole of religion with proof. The first are taken from the works of nature; *He, who planted the ear; He, who formed the eye.* The second are taken from the economy of Providence; *He, that chastiseth the heathen.* The third are taken from the history of the church; *He, that teacheth man knowledge.*

The first are taken from the wonderful works of nature. The prophet alledgeth only two examples; the one is that of the ear, the other that of the eye. None can communicate what he hath not, is the most incontestible of all principles. He, who communicateth faculties to beings, whom he created, must needs possess whatever is most noble in such faculties. He, who empowered creatures to hear, must himself hear. He, who imparted the faculty of discerning objects, must needs himself discern them. Consequently, there is great extravagance in saying, *The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.*

The same argument, which the structure of our ears, and that of our eyes, affords us, we derive

derive alſo from all the wonderful works of the Creator. The Creator poſſeſſeth all thoſe great and noble excellencies in a ſupreme degree, the faint ſhadows of which he hath communicated to creatures. On this principle, what an idea ought we to form of the Creator!? From what a profound abyſs of power muſt thoſe boundleſs ſpaces have proceeded, that immeaſurable extent, in which imagination is loſt, thoſe vaſt bodies, that ſurround us, thoſe luminous globes, thoſe flaming ſpheres, which revolve in the heavens, along with all the other works that compoſe this univerſe? From what an abyſs of wiſdom muſt the ſucceſſions of ſeaſons, of day, and of night, have proceeded, thoſe glittering ſtars, ſo exact in their courſes, and ſo punctual in their duration; along with all the different ſecret ſprings in the univerſe, which with the utmoſt accuracy anſwer their deſign? From what an abyſs of intelligence muſt rational creatures come, beings, who conſtitute the glory of the intelligent world; profound politicians, who pry into the moſt intricate folds of the human heart; generals, who diffuſe themſelves through a whole army, animating with their eyes, and with their voices, the various regiments, which compoſe their forces; admirable genius's, who developе the myſteries of nature, riſing into the heavens by dioptrics, deſcending into the deepeſt ſubterranean abyſſes; quitting continental confinement by the art of navigation; men, who croſs the waves, and, in ſpite of the winds, contemn the rocks, and truſt a few planks faſtened together to fail to the more diſtant climes? Who can refuſe to the author of all theſe wonderful works the faculty of ſeeing and hearing?

But I do not pretend to deny, an infidel will ſay, that all theſe wonderful works owe their exiſtence to a Supreme cauſe; or that the Supreme Being, by whom alone they exiſt, does

not

not himself possess all possible perfection. But I affirm, that the Supreme Being is so great, and so exalted, that his elevation and inconceivable excellence prevent him from casting his eyes down to the earth, and paying any regard to what a creature so mean and so indigent as man performs. A Being of infinite perfection, does he interest himself in my conduct? Will he stoop to examine, whether I retain or discharge the wages of my servants? Whether I be regular or irregular in my family? and so on. A king, surrounded with magnificence and pomp, holding in his powerful hands the reigns of his empire; a king, employed in weighing reasons of state, in equipping his fleets, and in levying his armies; will he concern himself with the demarches of a few worms crawling beneath his feet?

But this comparison of God to a king, and of men to worms, is absurd and inconclusive. The economy of Providence, and the history of the church, in concert with the wonderful works of nature, discover to us ten thousand differences between the relations of God to men, and those of a king to worms of the earth. No king hath given intelligent souls to worms: but God hath given intelligent souls to us. No king hath proved, by ten thousand avenging strokes, and by ten thousand glorious rewards, that he observed the conduct of worms: but God, by ten thousand glorious recompenses, and by ten thousand vindictive punishments, hath proved his attention to the conduct of men. No king hath made a covenant with worms: but God hath entered into covenant with us. No king hath commanded worms to obey him: but God, we affirm, hath ordained our obedience to him. No king can procure eternal felicity to worms: but God can communicate endless happiness to us. A king, although he be a king, is yet a man;

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his mind is little and contracted, yea infinitely contracted; it would be abſurd, that he, being called to govern a kingdom, ſhould fill his capacity with trifles: But is this your notion of the Deity? The direction of the ſun, the government of the world, the formation of myriads of beings, which live through univerſal nature, the management of the whole univerſe, cannot exhauſt that intelligence, who is the object of our adoration and praiſe. While his thoughts include, in their boundleſs compaſs, all real and all poſſible beings, his eyes ſurvey every individual, as if each were the ſole object of his attention.

Theſe arguments being thus ſtated, either our infidel muſt acknowledge, that they, at leaſt, render probable the truth of religion in general, and of this theſis in particular, *God regardeth the actions of men:* or he refuſeth to acknowledge it. If he refuſe to acknowledge it; if he ſeriouſly affirm, that all theſe arguments, very far from ariſing to demonſtration, do not even afford a probability in favor of religion; then he is an idiot, and there remains no other argument to propoſe to him, than that of our prophet, *Thou fool, when wilt thou be wise?*

I even queſtion whether any unbeliever could ever perſuade himſelf of what he endeavors to perſuade others; that is, that the aſſemblage of truths, which conſtitute the body of natural religion; that the heavy ſtrokes of juſtice avenging vice, and the extatic rewards accompanying virtue, which appear in Providence; that the accompliſhment of numerous prophecies; that the operation of countleſs miracles, which are related in authentic hiſtories of the church: nay, I cannot believe, that any infidel could ever prevail with himſelf to think, that all this train of argument doth not form a probability, againſt a ſyſtem of infidelity and atheiſm.

But if the power and the ſplendor of truth force his conſent; if he be obliged to own, that, although my arguments are not demonſtrative, they are, however, in his opinion, probable; then, with the prophet, I ſay to him, *O thou most brutiſh among the people!*

V. Why? Becauſe in comparing his logic with his *morality*, (and this is my fifth article) I perceive, that nothing but an exceſs of brutality can unite theſe two things. Hear how he reaſons. "It is probable, not only that there is a God, but alſo that this God regardeth the actions of men, that he reſerves to himſelf the puniſhment of thoſe, who follow the ſuggeſtions of vice, and the rewarding of them, who obey the laws of virtue. The ſyſtem of irreligion is counterbalanced by that of religion. Perhaps irreligion may be well grounded: but perhaps religion may be ſo. In this ſtate of uncertainty, I will direct my conduct on the principle, that irreligion is well grounded, and that religion hath no foundation. *I will break in pieces*, ver. 5. (this was the language, according to our pſalmiſt, of the unbelievers of his time) *I will break in pieces the people of God; I will afflict his heritage; I will ſlay the widow and the ſtranger*; or, to ſpeak agreeably to the genius of our own time, I will ſpend my life in pleaſure, in gratifying my ſenſual appetites, in avoiding what would check me in my courſe, in a word, in living as if I were able to demonſtrate either that there was no God, or that he paid no regard to the actions of men." Ought he not, rather, on the contrary, as his mind is in a ſtate of uncertainty between both, to attach himſelf to that, which is the moſt ſafe? Ought he not to ſay? "I will ſo regulate my conduct, that, if there be a God, whoſe exiſtence, indeed, I doubt, but, however, am not able to diſprove: If God pay any regard to the actions of men, which

which I queſtion, but cannot deny; he may not condemn me." Judge, ye chriſtians! men, who can thus brutally inſult a dark futurity, and the bare poſſibility of thoſe puniſhments, which religion denounceth againſt the wicked; ſuch men, are they not, either the moſt fooliſh, or the moſt brutiſh, among the people? "Underſtand, ye moſt brutiſh among the people! Ye fools! When will ye be wiſe?"

VI. I would attack *the conſcience* of the libertine, and terrify him with the language of my text. "He, who teacheth man knowledge, ſhall not he correct?" That is to ſay, "He, who gave you laws, ſhall not he regard your violation of them?" The perſons whom I attack, I am aware, have defied us to find the leaſt veſtige of what is called conſcience in them. But had you thoroughly examined yourſelves, when you ſet us at defiance on this article? Have you been as ſucceſsful, as you pretend to have been, in your daring enterpriſe of freeing yourſelves entirely from the terrors of conſcience? Is this light quite extinct? This interior maſter, doth he dictate nothing to you? This rack of the Almighty, doth it never force you to confeſs what you would willingly deny? Are your knees ſo firm, that they never ſmite together with dread and horror?

The queſtion, concerning the poſſibility of entirely freeing a man from the empire of conſcience, is a matter of fact. We think we have reaſon for affirming, that no man can bring himſelf to ſuch a ſtate. You pretend to be yourſelves a demonſtration to the contrary. You are, you declare, perfectly free from the attacks of conſcience. This is a fact, and I grant it. I take your word. But here is another fact, in regard to which we ought to believe in our turn, and on which our word is worth as much as yours. This is it. We have ſeen a great

number

number of ſick people; we have attended a great number of dying people. Among thoſe, to whom, in the courſe of our miniſtry, we have been called, we have met with all ſorts of characters. We have viſited ſome, who once were what you profeſs to be now, people, who boaſted of having freed themſelves from vulgar errors, from the belief of a God, a religion, a hell, a heaven, and of ſaying, when they abandoned themſelves to the utmoſt exceſſes, as you ſay, *The Lord ſhall not ſee; neither ſhall the God of Jacob regard it.* But we have never met with a ſingle individual, no, not one, who hath not contradicted himſelf at the approach of death. It is ſaid ſome have done this. For our parts, we have never met with any ſuch; we have never attended one, who hath not proved by his example, that you will contradict yourſelves alſo. We have often viſited thoſe, who have renounced all their ſyſtems, and have curſed their infidelity a thouſand, and a thouſand times. We have viſited many, who have required the aid of that very religion, which they had ridiculed. We have often ſeen thoſe, who have called ſuperſtition to aſſiſt religion; and who have turned pale, trembled, and ſhaken, at the bare ſight of our habit, before they had heard the ſentence, which God pronounced by our mouths. But we have never ſeen an individual, no, not one, who died in his pretended ſcepticiſm: It remains with you to account for theſe facts. You are to inquire, whether you yourſelves will be more courageous. It belongs to you to examine, whether you can bear thoſe dying agonies, thoſe devouring regrets, thoſe terrible miſgivings, which made your predeceſſors unſay all, and diſcover as much cowardice at death, as they had diſcovered brutality in their lives.

VII. Perhaps you have been ſurpriſed, my *brethren*, that we have reſerved the weakeſt of

our

our attacks for the laſt. Perhaps you object, that motives, taken from what is called *politeneſs*, and *a knowledge of the world*, can make no impreſſions on the minds of thoſe, who did not feel the force of our former attacks. It is not without reaſon, however, that we have placed this laſt. Libertines and infidels often pique themſelves on their *gentility*, and *good breeding*. They frequently take up their ſyſtem of infidelity, and purſue their courſe of profaneneſs, merely through their falſe notions of gentility. Reaſon, they think, too ſcholaſtic, and faith, pedantry. They imagine, that, in order to diſtinguiſh themſelves in the world, they muſt affect neither to believe nor to reaſon.

Well! you *accompliſhed gentleman!* do you know what the world thinks of you? The prophet tells you; but it is not on the authority of the prophet only, it is on the opinions of your fellow citizens, that I mean to perſuade you. You are conſidered in the world as the *moſt brutiſh of* mankind. *Underſtand, ye moſt brutiſh among the people!* What is *an accompliſhed gentleman?* What is politeneſs and good breeding? It is the art of accommodating one's ſelf to the genius of that ſociety, and of ſeeming to enter into the ſentiments of that company, in which we are; of appearing to honor what they honor; of reſpecting what they reſpect; and of paying a regard even to their prejudices, and their weakneſſes. On theſe principles, are you not *the rudeſt and moſt unpoliſhed* of mankind? Or, to repeat the language of my text, are you not the *moſt brutiſh among the people?* You live among people, who believe a God, and a religion; among people, who were educated in theſe principles, and who deſire to die in theſe principles; among people, who have, many of them, ſacrificed their reputation, their eaſe, and their fortune, to religion. Moreover, you live

in a ſociety, the foundations of which ſink with thoſe of religion, ſo that were the latter undermined, the former would, therefore, be ſunk. All the members of ſociety are intereſted in ſupporting this edifice, which you are endeavoring to deſtroy. The magiſtrate commands you not to publiſh principles that tend to the ſubverſion of his authority. The people requeſt you not to propagate opinions, which tend to ſubject them to the paſſions of a magiſtrate, who will imagine, he hath no judge ſuperior to himſelf. This diſtreſſed mother, mourning for the loſs of her only ſon, prays you not to deprive her of the conſolation, which ſhe derives from her preſent perſuaſion, that the ſon, whom ſhe laments, is in poſſeſſion of immortal glory. That ſick man beſeecheth you not to diſabuſe him of an error, that ſweetens all his ſorrows. You dying man begs you would not rob him of his only hope. The whole world conjures you not to eſtabliſh truths, (even ſuppoſing they were truths, an hypotheſis which I deny and deteſt) the whole world conjures you not to eſtabliſh truths, the knowledge of which would be fatal to all mankind. In ſpite of ſo many voices, in ſpite of ſo many prayers, in ſpite of ſo many intreaties, and among ſo many people intereſted in the eſtabliſhment of religion; to affirm that religion is a fable, to oppoſe it with eagerneſs and obſtinacy, to try all your ſtrength, and to place all your glory, in deſtroying it: What is this but the height of rudeneſs, brutality, and madneſs? "Underſtand, ye moſt brutiſh among the people! Ye fools! When will ye be wiſe?"

Let us put a period to this diſcourſe. We come to you, my brethren! When we preach againſt characters of theſe kinds we think, we read what paſſes in your hearts. You congratulate *yourſelves*, for the moſt part, for not being of *the number*, for deteſting infidelity, and for reſpecting

reſpecting religion. But ſhall we tell you, my brethren? How odious ſoever the men are, whom we have deſcribed, we know others more odious ſtill. There is a reſtriction in the judgment, which the prophet forms of the firſt, when he calls them in the text, *The most foolish, and the most brutish among the people*; and there are ſome men, who ſurpaſs them in brutality and extravagance.

Do not think we exceed the truth of the matter, or that we are endeavoring to obtain your attention by paradoxes. Really, I ſpeak as I think; I think, there is more ingenuouſneſs, and even, (if I may venture to ſay ſo) a leſs fund of turpitude in men, who, having reſolved to roll on with the torrent of their paſſions, endeavor to perſuade themſelves, either, that there is no God, or that he pays no regard to the actions of men; than in thoſe, who, believing the exiſtence, and providence of God, live as if they believed neither. Infidels were not able to ſupport, in their exceſſes, the ideas of an injured benefactor, of an angry Supreme Judge, of an eternal ſalvation neglected, of daring hell, a *lake burning with fire and brimstone, and smoke ascending up for ever and ever*, Rev. xxi. 8. and xiv. 11. In order to give their paſſions a free ſcope, they found it neceſſary to divert their attention from all theſe terrifying objects, and to efface ſuch ſhocking truths from their minds.

But you! who believe the being of a God! You! who believe yourſelves under his eye, and who inſult him every day without repentance, or remorſe! You! who believe, God holds thunder in his hand to cruſh ſinners, and yet live in ſin! You! who think, there are devouring flames, and chains of darkneſs, and yet preſumptuouſly brave their horrors! You! who believe the *immortality* of your ſouls, and yet occupy

yourſelves

yourſelves about nothing but the preſent life! What a front! What a brazen front is YOURS!

You conſider a revelation proceeding from heaven, and ſupported by a thouſand authentic proofs. But, if your faith be well grounded, how dangerous is your condition! For, after all, the number of evidences, who atteſt the religion, which you believe, this number of witneſſes depoſe the truth of the practical part of religion, as well as the truth of the ſpeculative part. Theſe witneſſes atteſt, that "without holineſs, no man ſhall ſee the Lord;" that "neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God," Heb. xii. 14. 1 Cor. vi. 10. And conſequently, theſe evidences atteſt, that you thieves, that you coveteous, that you drunkards, that you revilers, that you extortioners, ſhall be excluded from that happy manſion. Do you reject this propoſition? Claſs yourſelves then with infidels. Contradict nature; contradict conſcience; contradict the church; deny the recovery of ſtrength to the lame; the giving of ſight to the blind; the raiſing of the dead; contradict heaven, and earth, and ſea, nature, and every element. Do you admit the propoſition? Acknowledge then, that you muſt be irretrievably loſt, unleſs your ideas be reformed and renewed, unleſs you renounce the world, that enchants and faſcinates your eyes.

This, my brethren, this is your remedy. This is what we hope for you. This is that, to which we exhort you by the compaſſion of God, and by the great ſalvation, which religion preſents to you. Reſpect this religion. Study it every day. Apply its comforts to your ſorrows, and its precepts to your lives. And, joining promiſes to precepts, and precepts to promiſes, aſſort your chriſtianity. Aſſure your-

ſelves,

selves, then, of the peace of God in this life, and of a participation of his glory after death. God grant you this grace!—Amen.

SERMON

SERMON IX.

THE HARMONY OF RELIGION AND CIVIL POLITY.

PROVERBS xiv. 34.

Righteousness exalteth a Nation.

TO propoſe maxims of civil polity in a religious aſſembly, to propoſe maxims of religion in a political aſſembly, are two things, which ſeem alike ſenſeleſs and imprudent. The chriſtian is ſo often diſtinguiſhed from the ſtateſman, that, it would ſeem, they were oppoſite characters. We have been lately taught to believe, that Jeſus Chriſt, by giving us an idea of a ſociety more noble than any we can form upon earth, hath forbidden us to prevent the miſeries of this ſtate, and to endeavor to procure the glory of it. It hath been ſaid, that kingdoms and ſtates cannot be elevated without violating the laws of equity, and infringing the rights of the church.

How general ſoever this odious notion may have been, hardly any one hath appeared openly to avow it till of late. The impudence of pleading for it was reſerved for our age, for a chriſtian admitted into your provinces, cheriſhed in your boſom, and, O ſhame of our churches! appearing among proteſtant refugees, as the devil formerly preſented himſelf before the Lord among the angels of God.*

We propoſe to-day, my brethren, to endeavor to unravel the ſophiſms of this author, to ſhew you

* *Voyez* Bayle, Continuat. des penſees divers. *Tom. iii. pag. 598.*

you the agreement of religion with civil polity, and to eſtabliſh this propoſition, that as there is nothing in religion to counteract the deſign of a wiſe ſyſtem of civil polity, ſo there is nothing in a wiſe ſyſtem of civil government to counteract the deſign of the chriſtian religion. It was the wiſeſt of all kings, who taught us this leſſon. He ſpeaks of the *exaltation* of a nation, and this is the end of civil polity. He ſpeaks of *righteouſneſs*, and this is the deſign of religion, or rather, this is religion itſelf. He affirms, that the latter is the foundation of the former, and this is the agreement of religion with civil government. It is *righteouſneſs*, ſaith he, it is *righteouſneſs*, that *exalteth a nation*.

This propoſition of Solomon needs both explication and proof; and this diſcourſe is intended to furniſh both.

In our firſt part we will ſtate the queſtion, fix the ſenſe of theſe terms, righteouſneſs, exaltation; we will ſet aſide the various falſe ſenſes, which occaſioned the opinion that we intend to oppoſe; and by theſe means we will preclude ſuch objections as may be made againſt our doctrine.

In the ſecond part, we will alledge ſome arguments in favour of the propoſition contained in the text when properly explained, and ſo prove that *righteouſneſs exalteth a nation*.

This nation is exalted, my brethren: but, allow me to ſay, it is not by its *righteouſneſs*. We have not therefore choſen this text to create an opportunity of making encomiums on you: but we treat of the ſubject in order to fix your attention on the proper means of preſerving and augmenting your elevation. Happy if our deſign meet with ſucceſs! Happy if we contribute, though not according to the extent of our wiſhes, yet according to the utmoſt of our ability, to the glory of this ſtate!

1. We just now insinuated, that the false glosses put upon the maxim of the wise man were the principal causes of our backwardness to admit the truth of it. It is, therefore, important to state the question clearly.

1. When we affirm that *righteousness* and religion in general, (for it would be easy to prove that the word *righteousness* in the text is to be taken in this vague sense) I say, when we affirm that religion *exalteth a nation*, we do not mean such a religion as many imagine. We ingenuously acknowledge, and would to God the whole world acknowledged! that neither the religion of a cruel man, nor the religion of a superstitious person, nor the religion of an enthusiast, can *exalt a nation*.

How can the religion of a *cruel* man exalt a nation? The religion of such men is too well known for the peace of Europe. Such as these, under pretence of devotion, cut a free course for their own black and inflexible passions. These arm themselves with the civil sword to destroy all, who doubt the truth of their systems; they put violence in the place of demonstration, and endeavor to establish the gospel, as if it were the Koran of Mohammed, by force and constraint. These characters, as I just now said, are too well known for the peace of Europe. Even now, while I speak, I behold many, who have suffered under such cruelty, and have opposed the strongest argument against it. No, my brethren, this is not the religion that *exalteth a nation*. Such a religion depopulates states, ruins commerce, and is a never-failing source of civil wars and intestine commotions. The religion, of which we speak, is a kind, pacific, gentle religion; a religion, the grand character of which is forbearance, benevolence, and fraternal love; a religion inimical to error and *heresy*: but which, however, gives the benefit

ous and the heretic; a religion, which exerts itſelf to eradicate falſe doctrines: but which leaves each at-liberty to admit the truth; a religion, which hath no other ſword than the *ſword of the Spirit*, nor any other weapon than that of the word.

How can the religion of a *ſuperſtitious* man exalt a nation? It makes devotion degenerate into idleneſs, it increaſeth the number of eccleſiaſtics, and ſo renders many members uſeleſs to ſociety. It waſtes, in pretendedly pious foundations, immenſe ſums, which might have contributed to the advancement of arts and ſciences. It generates ſcruples in the minds of ſtateſmen, and ſo reſtrains the exerciſe of thoſe fine faculties, which God created for the good of the ſtate. It puts the caſuiſt in the place of the prince, and the prince in the place of the caſuiſt, the caſuiſt on the throne, and the prince in confeſſion at his feet. No, my brethren, this is not the religion, of which we ſpeak. The religion, of which we ſpeak, is oppoſite to ſuperſtition. It is juſt and ſolid, requiring us to "render unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's, and unto God the things that are God's," Matt. xii. 17. It preſcribes bounds to ſovereigns: but it requires caſuiſts alſo to know their place.

How can the religion of an *enthuſiaſt* contribute to the exaltation of a nation? The ſoul of an enthuſiaſt is always agitated with viſions and reveries. He inceſſantly thruſts himſelf into the company of the great, in order to inſpire them with his own ſpirit, and to breathe into them the ſoul of enthuſiaſm. He endeavors to animate governors, called to watch over a ſtate, and to conduct the people to national happineſs, with his wild ſchemes. He is always talking of extirpating the reformation, and thundering excommunications againſt thoſe, who do not enter into his extravagant projects; his anathemas

are as extravagant and wild as the projects themſelves. This is not the religion, of which we ſpeak. The religion, that *exalteth a nation*, is derived from the treaſures of the Divine Intelligence; it was formed in the mind of that Supreme Spirit, from whom wiſdom proceeds, as the ſtream flows from the ſpring: and not in the ideas of a diſordered brain, nor in the dreams of a viſionary.

We wiſh you to take religion and righteouſneſs in the *true* ſenſe of the terms. This is our firſt elucidation. This is the firſt precaution, that muſt be uſed to underſtand the ſtate of the queſtion.

2. We do not mean to affirm, that the true religion is ſo neceſſary in *all* its doctrines, and in *all* the extent of its precepts, that there are no inſtances of the flouriſhing of ſocieties, which have not been wholly regulated by it. We acknowledge that ſome ſocieties of men, who have been only partially governed by its maxims, have enjoyed long and glorious advantages upon the theatre of the world; either becauſe their falſe religions contained ſome principles of rectitude in common with the true religion; or becauſe God, in order to animate ſuch people to practiſe ſome virtues, ſuperficial indeed, but, however, neceſſary to the being of ſociety, annexed ſucceſs to the exerciſe of them; or becauſe he proſpered them to anſwer ſome ſecret deſigns of his wiſdom; or becauſe, finally, rectitude was never ſo fully eſtabliſhed on earth as to preclude injuſtice from enjoying the advantages of virtue, or virtue from ſuffering the penalties of vice. However it were, we allow the fact, and we only affirm, that the moſt ſure method that a nation can take to ſupport and exalt itſelf, is to follow the laws of righteouſneſs and the ſpirit of religion. This is a ſecond elu*cidation* tending to ſtate the queſtion clearly.

3. We

3. We do not affirm, that in *every particular case* religion is more ſucceſsful in procuring ſome temporal advantage than the violation of it; ſo that to conſider ſociety only in this point of light, and to confine it to this particular caſe independently of all other circumſtances, religion yields the honor of poſterity to injuſtice. We allow, ſome ſtate crimes have been ſucceſsful, and have been the ſteps, by which ſome people have acquired worldly glory. We even allow, that virtue hath ſometimes been an obſtacle to grandeur. We only affirm, that, if a nation be conſidered in every point of light, and in all circumſtances, if all things be weighed, it will be found, that the more a ſociety practiſe virtue, the more proſperity it will enjoy. We affirm, that the more it abandons itſelf to vice, the more miſery will it ſooner or later ſuffer; ſo that the very vice, which contributed to its exaltation, will produce its deſtruction; and the very virtue, which ſeems at firſt to abaſe it, will, in the end, exalt it to glory. This is a third elucidation.

4. We do not mean by exaltation, *that sort of elevation*, at which worldly heroes, or rather tyrants, aſpire. We acknowledge, that, if by *exalting a nation* be underſtood an elevation extending itſelf beyond the limits of rectitude, an elevation not directed by juſtice and good faith, an elevation conſiſting of the acquiſitions of wanton and arbitrary power, an elevation obliging the whole world to ſubmit to a yoke of ſlavery, and ſo becoming an executioner of divine vengeance on all mankind; we allow, that in this ſenſe *exaltation* is not an effect of *righteouſneſs*. But, if we underſtand by *exalting a nation* whatever governs with gentleneſs, negociates with ſucceſs, attacks with courage, defends with reſolution, and conſtitutes the happineſs of a people, whatever God always beholds

with

with favorable eyes ; if this be what is meant by *exalting a nation*, we affirm, a nation is exalted only by righteouſneſs.

5. In fine, we do not affirm, that the proſperity of ſuch a nation would be ſo perfect as to exclude all untoward circumſtances. We only ſay, that the higheſt glory, and the moſt perfect happineſs, which can be enjoyed by a nation in a world, where, after all, there is always a mixture of adverſity with proſperity, are the fruits of righteouſneſs. Theſe elucidations muſt be retained, not only becauſe they explain the theſis, which we are ſupporting, and becauſe they are the ground of what we ſhall hereafter ſay : but alſo becauſe they ſerve to preclude ſuch objections, to ſolve ſuch difficulties, and to unravel ſuch ſophiſms, as the author, whom we oppoſe, urges againſt us.

One argument againſt us is taken from the abuſes, which religion hath cauſed in ſociety : but this objection is removed, by taking away falſe ideas of religion. A ſecond objection is taken from the caſe of ſome idolatrous nations, who, though they were ſtrangers to revealed religion, have yet arrived at a great height of worldly glory : but this objection is removed by our ſecond elucidation. A third objection is taken from ſome particular caſe, in which vice is of more advantage to a ſtate than virtue : but this objection falls before the manner in which we have ſtated the queſtion. A fourth objection is taken from extravagant notions of glory : but this objection is removed by diſtinguiſhing true exaltation from falſe. Finally, an objection is taken from the evils, which the moſt virtuous ſocieties ſuffer, and we have acknowledged, that this world will always be to public bodies what it is to individuals, a place of miſery, and we have contented ourſelves with affirming, that the *moſt ſolid* happineſs, which can be enjoyed here,

hath

hath righteouſneſs for its cauſe. The narrow limits, to which we are confined, will not allow us to carry our reflections any further. They, however, who meditate profoundly on the matter, will eaſily perceive that all theſe objections are, if not abundantly refuted, at leaſt ſufficiently precluded by our explications.

We will now proceed to ſhew the grounds of the maxim of the wiſe man. We will open ſix ſources of reflections; an idea of ſociety in general; the conſtitution of each government in particular; the nature of arts and ſciences; the conduct of providence; the promiſes of God himſelf; and the hiſtory of all ages. Theſe articles make up the remainder of this diſcourſe.

II. 1. Let us firſt form an idea of *ſociety in general*, and conſider the motives, which induced mankind to unite themſelves in ſociety, and to fix themſelves in one place. By doing this, we ſhall perceive, that *righteouſneſs* is the only thing that can render nations happy. Every individual hath infinite wants; but only finite faculties to ſupply them. Each individual of mankind hath need of knowledge to inform him, laws to direct him, property to ſupport him, medicine to relieve him, aliments to nouriſh him, clothing and lodging to defend himſelf againſt the injuries of the ſeaſons. How eaſy would it be to enlarge this catalogue! Similar intereſts form a ſimilar deſign. Divers men unite themſelves together, in order that the induſtry of all may ſupply the wants of each.—This is the origin of ſocieties and public bodies of men.

It is eaſy to comprehend, that, in order to enjoy the bleſſings propoſed by this aſſemblage, ſome fixed maxims muſt be laid down and inviolably obeyed. It will be neceſſary for all the members of this body to conſider themſelves as naturally equal, that by this idea they may be inclined to afford each other mutual ſuccor. It will be ne-

ceſſary that they ſhould be ſincere to each other, leſt deceit ſhould ſerve for a vail to conceal the fatal deſigns of ſome from the eyes of the reſt. It will be neceſſary for all to obſerve the rules of rigid equity, that ſo they may fulfil the contracts which they bound themſelves to perform, when they were admitted into this ſociety. It will be neceſſary, that eſteem and benevolence ſhould give life and action to righteouſneſs. It will be neceſſary, that the happineſs of all ſhould be preferred before the intereſt of one; and that in caſes where public and private intereſts claſh, the public good ſhould always prevail. It will be neceſſary, that each ſhould cultivate his own talents, that he may contribute to the happineſs of that ſociety, to which he ought to devote himſelf with the utmoſt ſincerity and zeal.

Now, my brethren, what can be more proper to make us obſerve theſe rules, than religion, than *righteouſness?* Religion brings us to feel our natural equality; it teacheth us, that we originate in the ſame duſt, have the ſame God for our Creator, are all deſcended from the ſame firſt parent, all partake of the ſame miſeries, and are all doomed to the ſame laſt end. Religion teacheth us ſincerity to each other, that the tongue ſhould be a faithful interpreter of the mind, that we ſhould *ſpeak every man truth with his neighbour*, Eph. iv. 25. and that, being always in the ſight of the God of truth, we ſhould never depart from the laws of truth. Religion teacheth us to be juſt, that we ſhould "render to all, their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor; that whatſoever we would that men ſhould do unto us, we ſhould do even ſo unto them," Rom. xiii. 7. Matt. vii. 12. Religion requireth us to be animated with charity, to conſider each other as creatures of one God, ſubjects of the ſame king, members of one body, and heirs of the ſame glory.

glory. Religion requireth us to give up private intereſt to public good, *not to ſeek our own, but every one another's wealth*; it even requireth us *to lay down our lives for the brethren.* Thus by conſidering nations in theſe primitive views, it is *righteouſness* alone that *exalts* them.

2. But all this is too vague. We proceed next to conſider *each form of government in particular.* It is impracticable for all the members of ſociety, on every preſſing occaſion, to aſſemble together and give their ſuffrages. Public bodies therefore agree to ſet apart ſome of their number, who are accounted the ſoul, the will, the determination of the whole. Some nations have committed the ſupreme power to one, whom they call *monarch*; this is a *monarchical* ſtate. Others have committed ſupreme power to a few of their own body, called *magiſtrates*, *ſenators*, *nobles*, or ſome other honorable appellation; this is a republic, called in the ſchools an ariſtocracy. Others have diffuſed ſupreme power more equally among all the members of their ſociety, and have placed it in all heads of families; this is a *popular government*, uſually called a democracy. Society gives its authority and privileges into the hands of theſe perſons; it entruſts and empowers them to make laws, to impoſe taxes, to raiſe ſubſidies, to make peace or declare war, to reward virtue, to puniſh vice; in one word, to do whatever may be beneficial to the whole ſociety, with the felicity of which they are entruſted.

If we conſider theſe various forms of government, we ſhall find, that each nation will be more or leſs happy in its own mode of governing, will more or leſs prevent the inconveniencies to which it is ſubject, according as it ſhall have more or leſs attachment to religion or *righteouſness.*

What are the particular inconveniencies of a *monarchical* government? In what caſes is monarchy fatal to the liberty, and ſo to the felicity

of

of a nation? When the monarch, instead of making the good of the people his supreme law, follows nothing but his own caprice. When he thinks himself vested with supreme power for his own glory, and not for the glory of his kingdom. When, by stretching his authority beyond its lawful bounds, he endeavors arbitrarily to dispose of the lives and fortunes of his subjects. When, in order to avenge a private quarrel, or to satiate his thirst for a glory, from which his people derive no benefit, he engageth them in bloody wars, and sacrificeth them to a vain and imaginary grandeur. When he wastes the substance of his people in superb buildings, in excessive embellishments, and in sumptuous equipages. When he imposes on them enormous tributes, and exorbitant taxes. When he is inaccessible to the widow and the orphan. When he gives himself up to indolence, and doth not study the wants of his subjects. When, though he appropriates to himself the advantages of empire, yet, in order to free himself from the fatigue of governing, he commits the reins to a rash counsellor or to an insolent favorite. When he entertains such an idea of royalty as one anciently formed, who defined it a right to do whatever we will with impunity; such an idea as that, which a mean flatterer gave of it to Alexander the Great, 'Do as many unjust actions as you will, impoverish your subjects by exactions, extortions, and rapines, to satisfy your luxury and ambition, it is all right, it is all lovely, because you choose to have it so.'* When, instead of being the father of his people, he strives to be the executioner, like that brutal emperor, who wished the Roman empire had but one head that he might strike it off at a blow.† These are the inconveniencies of the first kind of government. In

* Plutarch ad princip. indoct.

† Sueton. Calig. chap. xxx.

In what cafes is the ſecond kind of government hurtful? Is it not, when any one of the magiſtrates, inſtead of conſidering himſelf as a ſingle member of the aſſembly, aims to be at the head of it? When he intrudes into office by ſiniſter means. When he uſeth his power, not for the public good, but for the advancement and glory of his own family. When he is mean enough to ſell his vote. When he ingratiates himſelf with a number of ſeditious people, in order to form cabals, and to engroſs ſupreme power. When he doth not take pains to inform himſelf of the merits of a cauſe, before he determine it. When he aſſociates colleagues with himſelf, whoſe incapacity is intended to be made a foil to his own abilities, inſtead of calling in men more able than himſelf to ſupply his own defects. In fine, when he makes himſelf judge in his own cauſe.

Let us obſerve, laſtly, when a *popular* government becomes hurtful. Is it not when, by a mere principle of levity, laws are made and unmade by caprice? When, under pretence of equality, a proper deference to ſuperior underſtandings is refuſed? When intrigue and cabal give effect to evil counſels? When a powerful faction oppreſſes the virtuous few? When popular liberty degenerates into licentiouſneſs and anarchy, and when the ambition of many becomes an evil, as enormous and fatal as the tyranny of one? Theſe, and many more, are the imperfections of theſe three ſorts of government. Need we to take up your time in proving, that all theſe ills are moſt and beſt precluded by religion? Do we not all recollect ſome ſcripture maxim, which would reſtrain theſe exceſſes? I need not, therefore, multiply quotations to prove this point. Is not each of us convinced, that, if we thus conſider nations in regard to the forms of their government, it is *righteouſneſs alone that exalts them?*

3. Our

3. Our doctrine will appear in a clearer light ſtill, if we proceed to examine *the liberal arts and ſciences*. The more a ſociety follows the ſpirit of religion, the more will religion cheriſh them under its foſtering wing. *Juriſprudence* will flouriſh, becauſe law will be diſengaged from ambiguity, which perpetuates animoſities; becauſe counſellors will plead none but juſt cauſes; and becauſe judges will never ſuffer themſelves to be corrupted by *gifts, which blind the eyes of the wiſe*; but will always decide according to the ſpirit of the law, and the dictates of conſcience.

The *military art* will flouriſh, becauſe the ſoldier will not defraud the officer, the officer will not defraud the ſoldier; becauſe both will go into the army, not merely to obtain the favor of their governors, but to pleaſe God; becauſe, being prepared to die by an anticipated repentance, their ardor will not be reſtrained by the fear of falling into the hands of an angry God; becauſe, ſhould they have neglected to conciliate the favor of God before a battle, they would be perſuaded, even in the heat of it, that the beſt way to pleaſe him would be to diſcharge the duty of their office; whereas when ſoldiers feel their conſciences agitated, when amidſt the diſcharge of the artillery of their enemies they diſcover eternal flames, when they ſee hell opening under their feet, and the horrors of eternal puniſhment ſucceeding thoſe of the field of battle, they will always fight with reluctance, and endeavor to avoid future miſery by fleeing away from preſent death.

In a virtuous ſtate, *commerce* will flouriſh, becauſe the merchant, always ſpeaking the truth, and dealing with good faith, will attract general credit and confidence; always following the rules of wiſdom and prudence, he will never engage in raſh undertakings, which ruin families

and

and subvert whole houses; not being animated with avarice or vain glory, he will not first acquire riches by injustice, and next waste them with indiscretion; depending on the blessings of heaven, all his labors will be enlivened with courage and joy.

In such a state, *divinity* will flourish, because each, burning with zeal for the glory of God, will carefully cultivate a science, which hath God for its object; because, being free from a party spirit, he will receive the truth, whatever hand may present it to him; because, by referring religion to its chief end, he will not spend his life in the pursuit of trifles; because, full of zeal for his salvation, he will be attentive to every step towards it; because, not being enslaved by his passions, he will not be enveloped in the darkness produced by them; or, to express myself in the language of scripture, because, by doing *the will of God, he will know whether* such and such *doctrines* come from the Supreme Being, or from the preacher only, John vii. 17.

The *mechanical arts* will flourish in a virtuous state, because they, on whom God hath not bestowed genius equal to the investigation of abstract sciences, whom he hath fitted for less noble stations in society, will fill up those stations with the utmost care, and will be happy in deriving from them such advantages as they produce. Thus a just notion of arts and sciences opens to us a third source of arguments to prove the truth of our text.

4. The doctrine of *providence* opens a fourth, as others have observed. The conduct of providence, in regard to public bodies, is very different from that, which prevails in the case of individuals. In regard to the latter, providence is involved in darkness. Many times it seems to condemn virtue and crown injustice, and to leave innocence to groan in silence, and to exert

power

power guilt to riot and triumph in public. The wicked rich man *fared sumptuously every day*, Lazarus *desired* in vain *to be fed with the crumbs that fell from his table*, Luke xvi. 19, 21. St. Paul was executed on a ſcaffold. Nero reigned on Cæſar's throne. And to ſay all in one word, Jeſus Chriſt was born in a ſtable, and Herod lived and died in a palace.

But providence is directed in a different method in regard to public bodies. Proſperity in them is the effect of righteouſneſs, public happineſs is the reward of public virtue, the wiſeſt nation is uſually the moſt ſucceſsful, and virtue walks with glory by her ſide. God ſometimes indeed afflicts the moſt virtuous nations: but he doth ſo with the deſign of purifying them, and of opening new occaſions to beſtow larger benefits on them. He ſometimes indeed proſpers wicked nations; but their proſperity is an effort of his patience and long ſuffering, it is to give them time to prevent their deſtruction; yet, after all, as I ſaid before, proſperity uſually follows righteouſneſs in public bodies, public happineſs is the reward of public virtue, the wiſeſt nation is the moſt ſucceſsful, and glory is generally connected with virtue.

They, to whom we are indebted for this reflection, have grounded it on this reaſon. A day will come when Lazarus will be indemnified, and the rich man puniſhed; St. Paul will be rewarded, and Nero will be confounded; Jeſus Chriſt will fill a throne, and Herod will be covered with ignominy. Innocence will be avenged, juſtice ſatisfied, the majeſty of the laws repaired, and the rights of God maintained.

But ſuch retribution is impracticable in regard to public bodies. A nation cannot be puniſhed then as a nation, a province as a province, a kingdom as a kingdom. All different ſorts of government will be then aboliſhed. One indi-

vidual

vidual of a people will be put in poſſeſſion of glory, while another will be covered with ſhame and confuſion of face. It ſhould ſeem, then, that providence owes to its own rectitude thoſe times of vengeance, in which it pours all its wrath on wicked ſocieties, ſends them plagues, wars, famines, and other cataſtrophies, of which hiſtory gives us ſo many memorable examples. To place hopes altogether on worldly policy, to pretend to derive advantages from vice, and ſo to found the happineſs of ſociety on the ruins of religion and virtue, what is this but to inſult providence?—This is to arouze that power againſt us, which ſooner or later overwhelms and confounds vicious ſocieties.

5. If the obſcurity of the ways of providence, which uſually renders doubtful the reaſonings of men on its conduct, weaken the laſt argument, let us proceed to conſider, in the next place, the declarations of God himſelf on this article. The whole twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, all the bleſſings and curſes pronounced there, fully prove our doctrine. Read this tender complaint, which God formerly made concerning the irregularities of his people. "O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end! How ſhould one chace a thouſand, or two put ten thouſand to flight?" chap. xxxii. 29, 30. Read the affecting words, which he uttered by the mouth of his prophet, "O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Iſrael had walked in my ways! I ſhould ſoon have ſubdued their enemies, and turned my hand againſt their adverſaries. Their time ſhould have endured forever. I ſhould have fed them alſo with the fineſt of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock ſhould I have ſatisfied them," Pſalm lxxxi. 13, &c. Read the noble promiſes made by the miniſtry of Iſaiah, "Thus ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Iſrael, I am the

Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way thou ſhouldeſt go. O that thou hadſt hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteouſneſs as the waves of the ſea: thy ſeed alſo had been as the ſand, and thy name ſhould not have been cut off, nor deſtroyed from before me," chap. xlviii. 17, &c. Read the terrible threatenings denounced by the prophet Jeremiah, "Though Moſes and Samuel ſtood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: caſt them out of my ſight, and let them go forth. And it ſhall come to paſs, if they ſay unto thee, Whither ſhall we go forth? then thou ſhalt tell them, Thus ſaith the Lord, Such as are for death, to death; and ſuch as are for the ſword, to the ſword; and ſuch as are for the famine, to the famine; and ſuch as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, ſaith the Lord; the ſword to ſlay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beaſts of the earth, to devour and deſtroy. For who ſhall have pity upon thee, O Jeruſalem? or who ſhall bemoan thee? or who ſhall go aſide to aſk how thou doeſt? Thou haſt forſaken me, ſaith the Lord, thou art gone backward: therefore will I ſtretch out my hand againſt thee, and deſtroy thee; I am weary of repenting," chap. xv. 1, &c. The language of our text is agreeable to all theſe paſſages; it is *righteouſneſs*, ſaith the text, it is righteouſneſs that *exalteth a nation*. Thus God ſpeaks; moreover, thus he acts, as we ſhall ſhew you in the next article.

6. *The hiſtory of all ages* affords us another claſs of arguments in defence of our doctrine, and ſo proves the truth of it by experience.

Had ever preacher a wider or more fruitful field than this, which opens to our view in this part of our diſcourſe? Shall we produce you a liſt of Egyptians, Perſians, Aſſyrians, and Greeks, or

or Romans who ſurpaſſed them all? Shall we ſhew you all theſe nations by turns exalted as they reſpected righteouſneſs, or abaſed as they neglected it?

By what myſterious art did ancient Egypt ſubſiſt with ſo much glory during a period of fifteen or ſixteen ages?* By a benevolence ſo extenſive, that he, who refuſed to relieve the wretched, when he had it in his power to aſſiſt him, was himſelf puniſhed with death: by a juſtice ſo impartial, that their kings obliged the judges to take an oath, that they would never do any thing againſt their own conſciences, though they, the kings themſelves, ſhould command them: by an averſion to bad princes, ſo fixed, as to deny them the honors of a funeral: by invariably rendering to merit public praiſe, even beyond the grave; for when an Egyptian died, a ſeſſion was held for the direct purpoſe of inquiring how he had ſpent his life, ſo that all the reſpect due to his memory might be paid: by entertaining ſuch juſt ideas of the vanity of life, as to conſider their houſes as inns, in which they were to lodge as it were only for a night, and their ſepulcres as habitations, in which they were to abide many ages, in which, therefore, they united all the ſolidity and pomp of architecture, witneſs their famous pyramids: by a life ſo laborious, that even their amuſements were adapted to ſtrengthen the body, and improve the mind: by a readineſs to diſcharge their debts ſo remarkable, that they had a law, which prohibited the borrowing of money, except on condition of pledging the body of a parent for payment, a depoſit ſo venerable, that a man, who deferred the redemption of it, was looked upon with horror: in one word, by a wiſdom ſo profound, that Moſes himſelf is renowned in ſcripture for being *learned in it.*

By

* *Diodor. Sicil. lib. i. ſect. 2. Herod. lib. ii.*

By what marvellous method did the Perſians obtain ſuch a diſtinguiſhed place of honor in ancient hiſtory?* By conſidering falſehood in the moſt horrid light, as a vice the meaneſt and moſt diſgraceful: by a noble generoſity, conferring favors on the nations they conquered, and leaving them to enjoy all the enſigns of their former grandeur: by an univerſal equity, obliging themſelves to publiſh the virtues of their greateſt enemies: by obſerving, as an inviolable ſecret, ſtate affairs, ſo that, to uſe the language of an ancient author, neither promiſes nor threatenings could extort it, for the ancient laws of the kingdom obliged them to be ſilent under pain of death: by a decorum ſo regular, that queens and all court ladies quitted the table as ſoon as ever the company began to lay aſide moderation in drinking: by religiouſly recording noble actions, and tranſmitting them to poſterity in public regiſters: by educating their children ſo wiſely, that they were taught virtue as other nations were taught letters: by diſcovering no grief for ſuch youths as died uneducated. The children of the royal family were put, at fourteen years of age, into the hands of four of the wiſeſt and moſt virtuous ſtatemen. The firſt taught them the worſhip of the gods; the ſecond trained them up to ſpeak truth and practiſe equity; the third habituated them to ſubdue voluptuouſneſs, to enjoy real liberty, to be always princes, and always maſters of themſelves and their own paſſions; the fourth inſpired them with courage, and, by teaching them how to command themſelves, taught them how to maintain dominion over others.

We purpoſely omit the noble and virtuous actions of the Aſſyrians, and Medes, the Greeks, and other nations, who were the glory of the ages in which they lived. But let us not paſs by ancient

* *Herod.* lib. i. iii. *Plat. Alcib.* 1.

ancient Rome: Was ever nation more exalted?* One expreſſion of Cæſar will give us a juſt notion of their excellence. Cicero recommended a friend to him, and this was his anſwer: *In regard to Marcus Furius, whom you have recommended to me, I will make him king of Gaul. If you have any other friends you wish to have promoted, you may command me.*† But by what unheard-of prodigy did old Rome, compoſed at firſt of no more than three thouſand inhabitants, carry conqueſt in leſs than ſix hundred years to the ends of the earth? Thus ſpeaks the Emperor Julian. By what impenetrable ſecret did this confuſed mixture of vagabonds and thieves become a ſeminary of heroiſm and grandeur? By a wiſe docility, ſo that even kings ſometimes ſubmitted to the advice of individuals; witneſs Tullus Hoſtilius, who durſt not decide the caſe of Horatius, but referred it to the people:‡ by an obſervation of the law ſo ſtrict, that Brutus condemned his two ſons to die by the hands of the public executioner, for having liſtened to the ambitious propoſals of the Tarquins, who were conſpiring to enſlave the citizens, and remount the throne: by a frugality ſo great, that ſuch men as Curius, Fabricius, Regulus, Æmilius, Paulus, and Mummius, theſe great deliverers of the Roman people, were ſeen to feed their own cattle, to cultivate their lands, and to live without pomp and parade: by an excellent economy, ſo that Atilius Regulus, who commanded a Roman army in Africa, demanded leave of the Senate to go home and provide for the wants of his family, from whom a day laborer had ſtolen the working tools uſed in cultivating his eſtate of

* Montaign de la grandeur Romaine, lib. ii. chap. 24.

† Cicer. Epiſt. ad famil. lib. vii. 5. Some copies read not Furius, but M. Orſius. See Spanheim in the Cæſars, page 161.

‡ Liv. lib. i. 26.

ſeven acres; a requiſition ſo juſt, that the Senate engaged to buy tools, to cultivate his land, and to ſupport his wife and children at the public charge:* ſo far did they carry this virtue, that the elder Cato, returning from Spain to Italy, ſold his horſe to ſave the charge of freight, and uſually, when he travelled, carried his own knapſack, which contained all his travelling neceſſaries: by an ardent love for the general good, ſo that every thing was reſerved for the public: temples, baths, roads, aqueducts, triumphal arches, all were ſuperb, when the national glory was in view, as all things for the uſe of individuals were plain: by an utter averſion to uſeleſs bravery, ſo that they conſidered in a light equally mean, the general, who expoſed his perſon needleſsly, and him, who avoided danger, when the public good rendered it neceſſary for him to expoſe himſelf:† by a ſcrupulous caution not to undertake unjuſt wars; to guard againſt which, they had a college at Rome, where it was coolly examined, whether an intended war were juſt or unjuſt, before it was propoſed to the ſenate and the people:‡ by an unſurmountable averſion to every ſpecie of military fraud, ſo that Lucius Marcius, (my brethren, how ought this idea of Pagan heroes to cover ſome with confuſion, who oſtentatiouſly affect to play the hero in the chriſtian world!) Lucius Marcius, I ſay, having deceived Perſes, king of Macedonia, by giving him falſe hopes of peace, and having conquered him by this ſtratagem, was adjudged by the ſenate to have violated the Roman laws, and to have ſwerved from the ancient cuſtoms, according to which it was a maxim to conquer by valor and not by fraud.

If;

* Liv. Epitom. lib. 18. Montagne de la parſimonie des anciens, lib. i. chap. 50.

† *Selluſt* de bell. Catil ix.

‡ *Coll.* des feciaux. Dion. Halic. lib. ii. Antiq. *Rom. lib.* i. 32.

If, having ſhewn the cauſe of the proſperity of ancient nations, we were to inquire into the reaſons of their decline; were we to compare the Egyptians under their wiſe kings with the Egyptians in a time of anarchy, the Perſians victorious under Cyrus, with the Perſians enervated by the luxuries of Aſia, the Romans at liberty under the Conſuls, with the Romans enſlaved by their Emperors, we ſhould find, that the decline of each of theſe nations was owing to the practice of vices oppoſite to the virtues which had cauſed its elevation: we ſhould be obliged to acknowledge, that vain glory, luxury, voluptuouſneſs, diſunion, envy, and boundleſs ambition, were the hateful means of ſubverting ſtates, which, in the height of their proſperity, expected, and in all appearance juſtly expected, to endure to the end of time: we ſhould be obliged to allow, that ſome exceſſes, which, in certain circumſtances, had contributed to exalt theſe nations, were, in other circumſtances, the means of ruining them.

True, ambition impelled Cæſar to elevate the Republic of Rome to a pitch as high as it is poſſible for human grandeur to attain. Armed for the defence of the Republic, he fought for it, though leſs for it than for his own glory, and diſplayed, we grant, the Roman eagle in the fartheſt parts of Aſia, rendered Gaul tributary, ſwelled the Rhine with German blood, ſubdued the Britons, and made all the Adriatic coaſts reſound the fame of his victories. But did not the ſame ambition impel him to excite a civil war to arm Rome againſt Rome, to cover the Pharſalian field with carnage and ſoak the ground with Roman blood, to purſue the ſhattered remains of Pompey's army into the heart of Africa, to give a queen, or rather a proſtitute, the kingdom of Egypt, to reduce the firſt and moſt free of all nations to a ſtate of meanneſs and ſervility beneath the moſt

abject

abject of mankind? For, my brethren, what were theſe Romans after they had loſt their liberty, and given themſelves up to abſolute maſters? Theſe Romans, who had given the univerſe law; theſe Roman citizens, even the meaneſt of them, who would have thought themſelves diſgraced had they mixed their blood with that of kings; theſe Romans, once ſo jealous of their liberty, have we not ſeen theſe very people under their emperors ſubmit to vaſſalage ſo as to become a ſcandal even to ſlaves? Infamous flatterers, did not they erect altars to Claudius, Caligula, and Nero? Did not Rome hear one of its citizens addreſs this language to the laſt of theſe monſters? "Chooſe, Cæſar, what place you will among the immortal gods. Will you ſway the ſceptre of Jupiter, or mount the chariot of Apollo? There is not a deity, who will not yield his empire to you, and count it an honor to reſign in your favor."*

But is it neceſſary to quote ancient hiſtory in proof of what we have advanced, that is, that the ſame vices, which contribute at firſt to exalt a nation, in the end cauſe its decline and ruin? There is A NATION,† in favor of which all things ſeem to promiſe a general and laſting proſperity. It has an advantageous ſituation, a fruitful ſoil, a temperate climate, an agreeable ſociety, an eaſy acceſs, a mutual generoſity, an inimitable induſtry, quick penetration in council, heroical courage in war, incredible ſucceſs in trade, ſurpriſing dexterity in arts, indiſputable reputation in ſciences, an amiable toleration in religion, ſeverity blended with ſweetneſs, ſweetneſs tempered with ſeverity.

Does this nation paſs the bounds? At firſt it acquires advantages more than nature and art had given it. The boundleſs ambition of the

* Lucan. Pharſal. lib. i.

† This ſermon was preached in 1706.

the monarch inſpires the ſubjects with a noble pride. Authority, eſtabliſhed by deſpotical power, enſlaves the judgments of all to the will of one. A treacherous policy at firſt impoſes on neighboring ſtates. Troops, impelled by a raſh valor at firſt, ſurmount all obſtacles. Toleration is baniſhed, the prince takes the place of God himſelf, and exerciſes his prerogative. Violating the faith of edicts, procures ſome preſent advantages. An inſatiable avidity adds fortreſs to fortreſs, city to city, province to province, kingdom to kingdom. But where is divine providence? Where is the truth of our text, *righteousness exalteth a nation?* What pitch of grandeur can religion obtain for a people, which cannot be obtained by other means?

Stop. The objection made to our doctrine demonſtrates the truth of it. The ambition of the monarch, communicated to his ſubjects, will there produce all the fatal effects of ambition. Deſpotical power, which enſlaved the judgments of all to the abſolute will of one, will cauſe the judgments of all to reſiſt the will of one. That deceitful policy, which took neighboring ſtates by ſurprize, will inſpire them with diſtruſt and precaution. Troops hurried on by raſhneſs will find out that raſhneſs is the high road to defeat. Toleration diſallowed will diſaffect the hearts of faithful ſubjects, and induſtry will flee to foreign climes. The violation of edicts will deſtroy confidence in all the public inſtruments of government. An inſatiable avidity of territorial acquiſitions, of poſſeſſing forts, cities, provinces, and kingdoms without number, will require more attention and greater expenſe than any nation can furniſh. A ſtate in this condition, will ſink under the weight of its own grandeur, it will be attenuated by being expanded, and, if I may uſe ſuch an expreſſion, impoveriſhed by its abundance. Each paſſion

put

put in motion will give a ſhock peculiar to itſelf, and all together will unite in one general blow fatal to the edifice, which they had erected. A prince, by becoming an object of the admiration of the world, becomes at the ſame time an object of jealouſy, ſuſpicion, and terror. Hence come civil commotions and foreign wars. Hence the forming of leagues, and deep-concerted plots. Hence mortality, ſcarcity, and famine. Hence heaven and earth in concert againſt a ſtate, that ſeemed to defy both earth and heaven. Hence an eternal example to juſtify providence in all future ages, and to demonſtrate to the moſt obſtinate the doctrine of the text, that only rectitude can procure ſubſtantial glory.

Thus, we think, we have ſufficiently eſtabliſhed our prophet's propoſition: and we will finiſh the arguments, by which we have ſupported it, by giving you the character of that author, who hath taken the greateſt pains to ſubvert it.* He was one of thoſe inconſiſtent men, whom the fineſt genius cannot preſerve from ſelf-contradiction, and whoſe oppoſite qualities will always leave us in doubt, whether to place them in one extreme, or in another diametrically oppoſite. On the one hand, he was a great philoſopher, and knew how to diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood, for he could ſee at once a connection of principles, and a train of conſequences: on the other hand, he was a great ſophiſter, always endeavoring to confound truth with falſehood, to wreſt principles, and to force conſequences. In one view, admirably learned and of fine parts, having profited much by the labors of others, and more by the exerciſe of his own great ſenſe: in another view, ignorant, or affecting to be ignorant, of the moſt common things, advancing arguments which had been a thouſand

* Mr. Bayle.

thouſand times refuted, and ſtarting objections which the greateſt novice in the ſchools durſt not have mentioned without bluſhing. On the one hand, attacking the greateſt men, opening a wide field for them to labor in, leading them into devious and rugged paths, and, if not going beyond them, giving them a world of pains to keep pace with him: on the other hand, quoting the meaneſt geniuſes, offering a profuſion of incenſe to them, blotting his writings with names that had never been pronounced by learned lips. On the one hand, free, at leaſt in appearance, from every diſpoſition contrary to the ſpirit of the goſpel, chaſte in his manners, grave in his converſation, temperate in his diet, and auſtere in his uſual courſe of life: on the other, employing all the acuteneſs of his genius to oppoſe good morals, and to attack chaſtity, modeſty, and all other chriſtian virtues. Sometimes appealing to a tribunal of the moſt rigid orthodoxy, deriving arguments from the pureſt ſources, and quoting divines of the moſt unſuſpected ſoundneſs in the faith: at other times, travelling in the high road of heretics, reviving the objections of ancient hereſiarchs, forging them new armor, and uniting in one body the errors of paſt ages with thoſe of the preſent time. O that this man, who was endowed with ſo many talents, may have been forgiven by God, for the bad uſe he made of them! May that Jeſus, whom he ſo often attacked, have expiated his crimes! But, though charity conſtrains us to hope and wiſh for his ſalvation, the honor of our holy religion obliges us publicly to declare that he abuſed his own underſtandings; to proteſt before heaven and earth, that we diſown him as a member of our reformed churches, and that we ſhall always conſider a part of his writings as a ſcandal to good men, and as a peſt of the church.

We return to our prophet. Let us employ a few

few moments in reflecting on the truths we have heard. Thanks be to God, my brethren, we have better means of knowing the *righteousness* that *exalts a nation*, and more motives to practiſe it, than all the nations, of whoſe glory we have been hearing. They had only a ſuperficial, debaſed, confuſed knowledge of the virtues, which conſtitute ſubſtantial grandeur: and, as they held errors in religion, they muſt neceſſarily have erred in civil polity. God, glory be to his name! hath placed at the head of our councils the moſt perfect legiſlator, that ever held the reins of government in the world. This legiſlator is Jeſus Chriſt. *His kingdom*, indeed, *is not of this world*, but the rules he has given us to arrive at that, are proper to render us happy in the preſent ſtate. When he ſays, *Seek ye firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, and all other things ſhall be added to you*, Matt. vi. 33. he gives the command, and makes the promiſe to whole nations as well as to individuals.

Who ever carried ſo far as this divine legiſlator ideas of the virtues, of which we have been treating in ſeveral parts of this diſcourſe, and by practiſing which *nations are exalted?* Who ever formed ſuch juſt notions of that benevolence, that love of ſocial good, that generoſity to enemies, that contempt of life, that wiſdom, that veneration for noble exploits, that docility and frugality, that devotedneſs to public uſe, that diſtance from falſe glory, that magnanimity, and all the other virtues, which render antiquity venerable to us? Who ever gave ſuch wiſe inſtructions to kings and ſubjects, magiſtrates, and people, lawyers and merchants, ſoldiers and ſtateſmen, the world and the church? We know theſe virtues better than any other people in the world. We are able to carry our glory far beyond Egyptians and Perſians, Aſſyrians and Medes, Lacedemonians, Athenians, and Romans;

mans; if not that ſort of glory, which glares and dazzles, at leaſt that, which makes tranquil and happy, and procures a felicity far more agreeable than all the pageantry of heroiſm and worldly ſplendor.

Chriſtians, let not theſe be mere ſpeculations to us. Let us endeavor to reduce them to practice. Never let us ſuffer our political principles to claſh with the principles of our religion. Far from us, and far from us for ever, be the abominable maxims of that pernicious Florentine,* who gave ſtateſmen ſuch fatal leſſons as theſe: A prince, who would maintain his dignity, ought to learn not to be virtuous, when affairs of ſtate require him to practiſe vice; he ought to be frugal with his own private fortune, and liberal with public money; he ought never to keep his word to his own diſadvantage; he ought not ſo much to aſpire at virtue as at the ſemblance of it; he ought to be apparently merciful, faithful, ſincere and religious, but really the direct oppoſite; that he cannot poſſibly practiſe what are accounted virtues in other men, becauſe neceſſity of ſtate will often oblige him to act contrary to charity, humanity and religion; he ought to yield to the various changes of fortune, to do right as often as he can, but not to ſcruple doing wrong when need requires.—I ſay again, far from us be theſe abominable maxims! Let us obey the precepts of Jeſus Chriſt, and by ſo doing let us draw down bleſſings on this nation more pure and perfect than thoſe which we now enjoy.

The bleſſings we now enjoy, and which providence beſtowed on us ſo abundantly a few days ago,† ſhould inſpire us with laſting gratitude; however, my brethren, they are not, they ought not to be, the full accompliſhment of our wiſhes.

* Machiavel. Princ. xv. xvi. xvii.

† At the battle of Ramillies, May 23, 1706.

Such laurels as we aſpire at, are not gathered in fields of battle. The path to that eminence, to which we travel, is not covered with human gore. The acclamations we love, are not excited by wars, and rumors of wars, the clangor of arms, and the ſhoutings of armed men.

Were our pleaſure, though not of the pureſt ſort, perfect in its own kind, we ſhould experience a riſe in happineſs! But can we enjoy our victories, without mourning for the miſeries which procured them! Our triumphs indeed abaſe and confound our enemies, and make them lick the duſt; yet theſe very triumphs preſent one dark ſide to us. Witneſs the many wounds, which I ſhould make a point of not opening, were it not a relief to mourners to hear of their ſufferings; were it not equitable to declare to thoſe, whoſe ſorrows have procured our joy, that we remember them, that we are concerned for them, that we ſympathize with them, that we are not ſo taken up with public joy as to forget private woe. Witneſs, I ſay, ſo many deſolate houſes among us. Witneſs this mourning in which ſo many of us appear to-day. Witneſs theſe affectionate Joſephs, who lament the death of their parents. Witneſs theſe Marys and Marthas, weeping at the tomb of Lazarus. Witneſs theſe diſtreſſed Davids, who weep as they go, and exclaim, *O Abſalom, my ſon! my ſon Abſalom! would God I had died for thee! O Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon!* 2 Sam. xviii. 33. Witneſs theſe Rachels, who make Rama echo with their cries, *refuſing to be comforted, because their children are not*, Jer. xxxi. 15.

My dear brethren, on whom the hand of God is heavy, ye ſorrowful Naomis, ye melancholy *Maras, with whom the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly*, Ruth i. 20. we ſhare your griefs, we mix our tears with yours, we feel all the blows

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that ſtrike you. O fatal victory! O bloody glory! you are not fruits of *righteousness*.

Chriſtians, if our joy be mixed, it is becauſe our *righteousness* is mixed. Let us not ſearch for our misfortunes in any other cauſe. Let us do, when any thing is wanting to complete our joy, what the ancient people of God did, whenever they were conquered. The congregation was aſſembled, the ephod was put on, the oracle was conſulted, inquiſition was made from tribe to tribe, from family to family, from houſe to houſe, from perſon to perſon, who it was, whoſe ſin had cauſed the loſs of the victory, or the loſs of a regiment, and when he was diſcovered he was put to death. Joſhua, after he had met with a repulſe before Ai, and had loſt thirty-ſix men, rent his garments, and lay on his face upon the earth before the ark of the Lord. In like manner, let us, my brethren, at the remembrance of infected countries, fields of battle covered with carcaſes, rivers of blood dying the ſoil, confuſed heaps of dead and dying fellow-creatures, new globes of fire flying in the air, let us examine ourſelves. Happy, if, as in the caſe juſt now mentioned, only one criminal could be found among many thouſands of innocent perſons! Alas! we are obliged, on the contrary, to lament, that there is hardly one innocent among thouſands of the guilty.

Where is the Achan, who imbitters the glorious and immortal victories, which God grants to Iſrael? What tribe, what family, what houſe, ſhall be taken? Is it the magiſtrate? Is it the people? Is it the paſtor? Is it the flock? Is it the merchant? Is it the ſoldier? Ah! my brethren! do you not hear the oracle of the Lord anſwering from the terrible tribunal erected in your own conſciences? It is the magiſtrate; it is the people; it is the paſtor; it is the flock; it is the merchant; it is the ſoldier.

It is that *magistrate*, who, being required to have always before his eyes that God, *by whom kings reign*, and that throne, before which the greatest monarchs of the world must be judged, is dazzled with his own grandeur, governed by a worldly policy, and hath more at heart to enforce the observation of his own capricious orders, than those rules of eternal rectitude, which secure the safety and happiness of a nation.

It is that *people*, who, instead of considering the felicity of *that nation whose God is the Lord*, are attempting to be happy independently of God; choosing rather to sacrifice to blind chance, than to him who is the *happy God*, and who alone dispenses prosperous and adverse circumstances.

It is that *minister*, who, instead of confining his attention to the discharge of all the duties of his office, performs only such parts as acquire him a popular reputation, neglecting private duties, such as friendly and affectionate remonstrances, paternal advice, private charities, secret visits, which characterise the true ministers of the gospel.

It is that *congregation*, which, instead of regarding the word dispensed by us as the word of God, licentiously turns all public ministrations into ridicule, and under pretence of ingenuity and freedom of thought, encourages infidelity and irreligion; or, at best, imagines that religion consists more in hearing and knowing than in practice and obedience.

It is that *soldier*, who, though he is always at war with death, marching through fire and flames, hearing nothing but the sound of warlike instruments crying to him with a loud and dreadful voice, *remember, you must die!* yet frames a morality of his own, and imagines, that his profession, so proper in itself to incline him to obey the maxims of the gospel, serves to free him *from all obligation* to obedience.

Ah!

Ah! this it is, which obſcures our brighteſt triumphs; this ſtains our laurels with blood; this excites lamentations, and mixes them with our ſongs of praiſe. Let us ſcatter theſe dark clouds. Let us purify our righteouſneſs in order to purify our happineſs. Let religion be the bridle, the rule, the ſoul of all our councils; and ſo may it procure us unalterable peace, and unmixed pleaſure! or rather, as there is no ſuch pleaſure on earth, as imperfection is a character eſſential to human affairs, let us elevate our hearts and minds to nobler objects, let us ſigh after happier periods, and let each of us ſeek true glory in the enjoyment of God. God grant us this grace! To him be honor and glory for ever, Amen.

SERMON X.

CHRISTIAN HEROISM.

PROVERBS xvi. 32.

He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city.

WERE we to judge of theſe words by the firſt impreſſions they make on the mind, we ſhould place them among ſuch hyperbolical propoſitions as imagination forms to color and exceed truth. The mind on ſome occaſions is ſo ſtruck as to magnify the object in contemplation. The more ſuſceptible people are of lively impreſſions, the more ſubject they are to declamation and hyperbole. We find theſe maxims ſometimes neceſſary in explaining the ſacred authors. Were we to adhere ſcrupulouſly to their words, we ſhould often miſtake their meaning, and extend their thoughts beyond due bounds. The people of the eaſt ſeldom expreſs themſelves with preciſion. A cloud intercepting a few rays of light is the *ſun darkened:* A meteor in the air is *the powers of the heavens ſhaken:* Jonah in the belly of the fiſh is a man *down at the bottom of the mountains:* Thunder is the *voice of Jehovah, powerful and full of majeſty, dividing flames of fire, breaking cedars of Lebanon, making Syrians ſkip, and ſtripping forests bare:* A ſwarm of inſects is *a nation ſet in battle array, marching every one on his ways, not breaking their ranks, beſieging a city, having the teeth of a lion, and the cheek teeth of a great lion,* Joel i. 6. and ii. 7, 9.

If we be ever authorized to ſolve a difficult text, by examining the licenſe of hyperbolical ſtyle: if ever it be neceſſary to reduce hyperbole to preciſion, is it not ſo now in explaining the

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text before us? *He that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he that taketh a city.* What juſtneſs can there be in comparing a man, who by reflection corrects his paſſions, with an hero, who, in virtue of concerted plans, great fatigues, ſpending days and nights on horſeback, ſurmounting difficulties, enduring heats and colds, braving a variety of dangers, at laſt arrives, by marching through a ſhower of ſhot darkening the air, to cut through a ſquadron, to ſcale a wall, and to hoiſt his flag in a conquered city?

But however juſt this commentary may appear, you will make no uſe of it here, unleſs you place chriſtianity in the exerciſe of eaſy virtues, and after the example of moſt men, accommodate religion to your paſſions inſtead of reforming your paſſions by religion. Endeavor to form principles, reſiſt faſhion and cuſtom, eradicate prejudice, undertake the conqueſt of yourſelf, carry fire and ſword into the moſt ſenſible part of your ſoul, enter the liſts with your darling ſin, *mortify your members which are upon earth*, riſe above fleſh and blood, nature, and ſelf-love, and, to ſay all in one word, endeavor to *rule your ſpirit*; and you will find, that Solomon hath rigorouſly obſerved the laws of preciſion, that he hath ſpoken the language of logic and not of oratory, and that there is not a ſhadow of hyperbole or exaggeration in this propoſition, *He that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he that taketh a city.*

But to what period ſhall we refer the explication of the text? We will make meditation ſupply the place of experience, and we will eſtabliſh a truth, which the greateſt part of you have not experienced, and which perhaps you never will experience. This is the deſign of this diſcourſe. Our ſubject is true heroiſm, the real hero.

I enter into the matter. The word *heroism* is borrowed of the heathens. They called thoſe men

men heroes, whom a remainder of modesty and religion prevented their putting into the number of their gods, but who for the glory of their exploits were too great to be enrolled among mere men. Let us purify this idea. The man, of whom Solomon speaks, *he who ruleth his spirit*, ought not to be confounded with the rest of mankind; he is a man transformed by grace, one, who, to use the language of scripture, is a *partaker of the divine nature*. We are going to speak of this man, and we will first describe him, and next set forth his magnanimity, or, to keep to the text, we will first explain what it is *to rule the spirit*, and, secondly, we will prove, that *he, that ruleth his spirit, is better than he, that taketh a city*. If we proceed further, it will only be to add a few reflections tending to convince you, that you are all called to heroism; that there is no middle way in religion; that you must of necessity, either bear the shame and infamy of being mean and dastardly souls, or be crowned with the glory of heroes.

I. Let us first explain the words of the text, *to rule the spirit*. Few words are more equivocal in the sacred language than this, which our interpreters have rendered *spirit*. It is put in different places for the thoughts of the *mind*, the passions of the *heart*, the emotions of *sense*, phantoms of *imagination*, and illusions of *concupiscence*. We will not trouble you with grammatical dissertations. In our idiom, *to rule the spirit*, (and this is precisely the idea of Solomon) *to rule the spirit* is never to suffer oneself to be prejudiced by false ideas, always to see things in their true point of view, to regulate our hatred and our love, our desires and our inactivity, exactly according to the knowledge we have obtained after mature deliberation, that objects are worthy of our esteem, or deserve our aversion, that they are worth obtaining, or proper *to be neglected*.

But,

But, as this manner of ſpeaking, *to rule the ſpirit*, ſuppoſes exerciſe, pains, labors, and reſiſtance, we ought not to confine ourſelves to the general idea which we have given. We conſider man in three points of light; in regard to his natural diſpoſitions; in regard to the objects that ſurround him; and in regard to the habits which he hath contracted.

1. Conſider the *natural diſpoſitions* of man. Man, as ſoon as he is in the world, finds himſelf the ſlave of his heart, inſtead of being maſter of it. I mean, that inſtead of a natural facility to admit only what is true, and to love only what is amiable, he feels, I know not what, interior power, which diſpoſes him to truth and virtue, and conciliates him to vice and falſehood.

I am not going to agitate the famous queſtion of free-will, nor to enter the liſts with thoſe, who are noted in the church for the hereſy of denying the doctrine of human depravity; nor will I repeat all the arguments, good and bad, which are alledged againſt it. If there be a ſubject, in which we ought to have no implicit faith, either in thoſe who deny, or in thoſe who affirm; if there be a ſubject, in the diſcuſſion of which, they who embrace the ſide of error advance truth, and they who embrace the ſide of truth advance falſehoods, this is certainly the ſubject. But we will not litigate this doctrine. We will alledge here only one proof of our natural depravity, that ſhall be taken from experience, and, for evidence of this fatal truth, we refer each of you to his own feelings.

Is virtue to be practiſed? Who does not feel, as ſoon as he is capable of obſerving, an inward power of reſiſtance? By virtue, here I underſtand an univerſal diſpoſition of an intelligent ſoul to devote itſelf to order, and to regulate its conduct as order requires. Order demands, that

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when I ſuffer, I ſhould ſubmit myſelf to the mighty hand of God, which afflicts me. When I am in proſperity, order requires me to acknowledge the bounty of my benefactor. If I poſſeſs talents ſuperior to thoſe of my neighbor, order requires me to uſe them for the glory of him from whom I received them. If I am obliged to acknowledge, that my neighbor hath a richer endowment than I, order requires me to acquieſce with ſubmiſſion, and to acknowledge with humility this difference of endowment: ſhould I revolt with inſolence, or diſpute through jealouſy or ſelf-love, I ſhould act diſorderly.

What I affirm of virtue, that it is a general diſpoſition, that I affirm alſo in regard to an indiſpoſition to ſin. To avoid vice is to deſiſt alike from every thing contrary to order, from ſlander and anger, from indolence and voluptuouſneſs, and ſo on.

He, who forms ſuch ideas of the obligations of men, will have too many reaſons to acknowledge, by his own inward feelings and experience, that we bring into the world with us propenſities hoſtile and fatal to ſuch obligations. Some of theſe are in the body; others in the mind.

Some are in the *body*. Who is there, that finds in his ſenſes, that ſuppleneſs and readineſs of compliance with a volition, which is itſelf directed by laws of order? Who does not feel his conſtitution rebel againſt virtue? I am not ſpeaking now of ſuch men as brutally give themſelves up to their ſenſes, who conſult no other laws than the revolutions of their own minds, and who, having abandoned for many years the government of their ſouls to the humors of their bodies, have loſt all dominion over their ſenſes. I ſpeak of ſuch as have the moſt ſincere deſire to hear and obey the laws of order. How often does a tender and charitable ſoul find in a body *ſubject* to violence and anger, obſtacles againſt

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the exercise of its charity and tenderness? How often does a soul, penetrated with respect for the laws of purity, find in a body, rebellious against this virtue, terrible obstacles, to which it is in a manner constrained to yield?

Disorder is not only in the body; the *soul* is in the same condition. Consult yourselves in regard to such virtues, and vices as are, so to speak, altogether spiritual, and have no relation, or a very distant one, to matter, and you will find you brought into the world an indisposition to some of these virtues, and an inclination to the opposite vices. For example, avarice is one of these spiritual vices, having only a very distant relation to matter. I do not mean, that avarice does not incline us toward sensible objects, I only say, that it is passion less seated in the material than in the spiritual part of man; it rises rather out of reflections of the mind than out of motions of the body. Yet how many people are born sordid; people always inclined to amass money, and to whom the bare thought of giving, or parting with any thing, gives pain; people who prove, by the very manner in which they exercise the laws of generosity, that they are naturally inclined to violate them; people who never give except by constraint, who tear away, as it were, what they bestow on the necessities of the poor; and who never cut off these dear parts of themselves without taking the most affectionate leave of them? Envy and jealousy are dispositions of the kind, which we call spiritual. They have their seat in the soul. There are many persons, who acknowledge the injustice and baseness of these vices, and who hate them, and who nevertheless are not sufficient masters of themselves to prevent the dominion of them, at least to prevent a repetition of them, and not to find sometimes their own misery in the prosperity of other persons.

As we feel in our conſtitution obſtacles to virtue, and propenſities to vice, ſo we perceive alſo inclinations to error, and obſtacles to truth. Theſe things are cloſely connected; for if we find within us natural obſtacles to virtue, we find, for that very reaſon, natural obſtacles to truth; and if we be born with propenſities to vice, we are born on that very account prone to error. Strictly ſpeaking, all ideas of vice may be referred to one, that is to error. Every vice, every irregular paſſion openly or tacitly implies a falſehood. Every vice, every irregular paſſion includes this error, that a man, who gratifies his paſſion, is happier than he, who reſtrains and moderates it. Now, every man judging in this manner, whether he do ſo openly or covertly, takes the ſide of error. If we be then naturally inclined to ſome vices, we are naturally inclined to ſome errors, I mean, to admit that falſe principle, on which the irregular paſſion eſtabliſheth the vice it would commit, the deſire of gratification. An impaſſionate man is not free to diſcern truth from falſehood, at leaſt, he cannot without extreme conſtraint diſcern the one from the other. He is inclined to fix his mind on whatever favors his paſſion, changes its nature, and diſguiſes vice in the habit of virtue; and, to ſay all in one word, he is impelled to fix his mind on whatever makes truth appear falſe, and falſehood true.

I conclude, the diſpoſition of mind, of which Solomon ſpeaks, and which he deſcribes by *ruling the ſpirit*, ſuppoſes labor, conſtraint, and exerciſe. A man, who would acquire this noble diſpoſition of mind, a man, who would *rule his ſpirit*, muſt, in ſome ſort, re-create himſelf; he finds himſelf at once, if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, at war with nature; his body muſt be formed anew; his humors and his ſpirits muſt be turned into another channel; violence muſt be done to all the powers of his ſoul. 2.

2. Having considered man in regard to his natural dispositions, observe him, secondly, in regard to *surrounding objects*. Here you will obtain a second exposition of Solomon's words, *He, that ruleth his spirit*; you will have a second class of evidences of that exercise, labor, and constraint, which true heroism supposes. Society is composed of many enemies, who seem to be taking pains to increase those difficulties, which our natural dispositions oppose against truth and virtue.

Examine the members of this society among whom we are appointed to live, consult their ideas, hear their conversation, weigh their reasonings, and you will find almost every where, false judgments, errors, mistakes, and prejudices: prejudices of birth, taken from our parents, the nurses who suckled us, the people who made the habits, in which we were wrapped in our cradles: prejudices of education, taken from the masters, to whom the care of our earliest days was committed, from some false ideas, which they had imbibed in their youth, and from other illusions which they had created themselves: prejudices of country, taken from the genius of the people among whom we have lived, and, so to speak, from the very air we have breathed: prejudices of religion, taken from our catechists, from the divines we have consulted, from the pastors by whom we have been directed, from the sect we have embraced: prejudices of friendship, taken from the connections we have had, and the company we have kept: prejudices of trade and profession, taken from the mechanical arts we have followed, or the abstract sciences we have studied: prejudices of fortune, taken from the condition of life in which we have been, either among the noble or the poor. This is only a small part of the canals, by which error is conveyed to us. What efforts must a man make, what pains

muſt he take with himſelf, to preſerve himſelf from contagion, to hold his ſoul perpetually in equilibrium, to keep all the gates of error ſhut, and inceſſantly to maintain, amidſt ſo many prejudices, that freedom of judgment, which weighs argument againſt objection, objection againſt argument, which deliberately examines all that can be advanced in favor of a propoſition, and all that can be ſaid againſt it, which conſiders an object in every point of view, and which makes us determine only as we are conſtrained by the irreſiſtible authority, and by the ſoft violence of truth, demonſtration, and evidence ?

As the men, who ſurround us, faſcinate us by their errors, ſo they decoy us into vice by their example. In all places, and in all ages, virtue had fewer partizans than vice : in all ages and in all places, the friends of virtue were ſo few in compariſon of the partizans of vice, that the ſaints complained, that the earth was not inhabited by men of the firſt kind, and that the whole world was occupied by the latter, " the godly man ceaſeth ; the faithful fail from among the children of men. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men ; to ſee if there were any that did underſtand, and ſeek God. They are all gone aſide, they are altogether become filthy : there is none that doeth good, no not one," Pſal. xii. 1. and xiv. 2, 3. An exaggeration of the prophet, I grant, but an exaggeration for which the univerſality of human depravity hath given too much occaſion. Caſt your eyes attentively on ſociety, you will be, as our prophet was, aſtoniſhed at the great number of the partizans of vice ; you will be troubled, as he was, to diſtinguiſh in the crowd any friends of virtue ; and you will find yourſelf inclined to ſay, as he ſaid, *there is none that doeth good, no not one.*

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But how difficult is it to reſiſt example, and *to rule the ſpirit* among ſuch a number of tyrants, who aim only to enſlave it! In order to reſiſt example, we muſt inceſſantly oppoſe thoſe natural inclinations, which urge us to imitation. To reſiſt example, we muſt not ſuffer ourſelves to be dazzled either with the number, or the ſplendor of ſuch as have placed vice on a throne. To reſiſt example, we muſt brave perſecution, and all the inconveniences, to which worldly people never fail to expoſe them, who refuſe to follow them down the precipice. To reſiſt example, we muſt love virtue for virtue's ſake. To reſiſt example, we muſt tranſport ourſelves into another world, imagine ourſelves among thoſe holy ſocieties, who ſurround the throne of a holy God, who make his excellencies the continual matter of their adoration and homage, and who fly at the firſt ſignal of his hand, the firſt breath of his mouth. What a work, what a difficult work for you, poor mortal, whoſe eyes are always turned toward the earth, and whom your own involuntary and inſurmountable weight inceſſantly carries downward!

3. Finally, we muſt acknowledge what labor, pains and reſiſtance, the diſpoſition, of which Solomon ſpeaks, requires, if we conſider man in regard to the *habits* which he hath contracted. As ſoon as we enter into the world, we find ourſelves impelled by our natural propenſities, ſtunned with the din of our paſſions, and, as I juſt now ſaid, ſeduced by the errors, and carried away by the examples, of our companions. Seldom in the firſt years of life, do we ſurmount that natural bias, and that power of example, which impel us to falſe hood and ſin. Moſt men have done more acts of vice than of virtue, conſequently, in the courſe of a certain number of years, we contribute by our way of living to join to the depravity of nature that which comes from exerciſe and ha-

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bit. A man, who would *rule his spirit*, is then required to eradicate the habits which have taken poſſeſſion of him. What a taſk!

What a taſk, when we endeavor to prevent the return of ideas, which for many years our minds have revolved! What a taſk, to defend one's ſelf from a paſſion which knows all the avenues of the mind, and how to facilitate acceſs by means of the body! What a taſk, to turn away from the flattering images, and ſeducing ſolicitations of concupiſcence long accuſtomed to gratification! What a taſk, when we are obliged to make the greateſt efforts in the weakeſt part of life, and to ſubdue an enemy, whom we have been always uſed to conſider as unconquerable, and whom we never durſt attack, when he had no other arms than what we choſe to give him, and enjoyed no other advantages than ſuch as we thought proper to allow! Such labor, ſuch pains and conſtraint, muſt he experience, who acquires the art of *ruling his ſpirit!* Now then, as we have explained this diſpoſition of mind, let us aſſign the place which is due to him who hath it. Having given an idea of real heroiſm, we muſt diſplay the grandeur of it, and prove the propoſition in my text, *He that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he that taketh a city.*

II. For this purpoſe, it is not neceſſary to obſerve, that, by *him that taketh a city*, Solomon does not mean a man, who from principles of virtue, to defend his country and religion, hazards his life and liberty in a juſt war: in this view, *he that taketh a city, and he that ruleth his ſpirit*, is one and the ſame man. Solomon intends conquerors, who live, if I may expreſs myſelf ſo, upon victories and conqueſts; he intends heroes, ſuch as the world conſiders them.

Neither is it neceſſary preciſely to fix the bounds of this general expreſſion, *is better. He that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he that taketh a*

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city. The ſenſe is eaſily underſtood: in general, it ſignifies, that *he that ruleth his ſpirit*, diſcovers more fortitude, more magnanimity, and more courage, that he hath more juſt ideas of glory, and is more worthy of eſteem and praiſe, than they who are called in the world conquerors and heroes.

We will prove this propoſition by comparing the hero of the world with the chriſtian hero, and we will confine the compariſon to four articles: Firſt, the motives which animate them: ſecondly, the exploits they perform: thirdly, the enemies they attack: and laſtly, the rewards they obtain. *He that taketh a city*, is animated with motives mean and worldly, which degrade an intelligent ſoul, even while they ſeem to elevate it to a pinnacle of grandeur and glory: but *he that ruleth his ſpirit*, is animated by motives grand, noble and ſublime, every way ſuited to the excellence of our nature. *He that ruleth his ſpirit*, is capable of all the exploits of *him that taketh a city*: but *he that taketh a city*, is not capable of the exploits of *him that ruleth his ſpirit*. *He that taketh a city*, attacks an exterior enemy, to whom he hath no attachment: but *he that ruleth his ſpirit*, attacks an enemy who is dear to him, and hath the greatneſs of ſoul to turn his arms againſt himſelf. In fine, *he that taketh a city*, is crowned only by idiots, who have no juſt notions of grandeur and heroiſm: but *he that ruleth his ſpirit*, will be crowned with the hands of the only juſt appraiſer, and diſpenſer of glory. Theſe are four titles of ſuperiority, which the chriſtian hero hath over the falſe hero: four ſources of proofs to eſtabliſh the propoſition in our text, *He that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he that taketh a city.*

1. Let us conſider the *motives*, which animate a conqueror *that taketh a city*, and the motives which animate a man that obtains *rule over his*

spirit: the motives of the true hero, with the motives of the false hero. What are the motives of a false hero? What spirit animates him, when he undertakes to conquer a city? This is one of the questions which sinful passions have most obscured. Truth is disguised in epistles dedicatory, and in profane eulogiums, yea sometimes in religious discourses. The majesty of a victorious general, the glory of a conqueror, the pompous titles of victor, arbiter of peace, arbiter of war, have so dazzled us, and in some sort so perverted the powers of our souls that we cannot form just notions of this subject. Hear pure nature, formerly speaking by the mouth of a nation, who were the more wise for not being civilized by the injustice of our laws and customs. I speak of the ancient Scythians. The most famous taker of cities came to their cabins and caverns. He had already subdued his fellow citizens and neighbors. Already Thebes and Athens, Thrace and Thessaly, had submitted to his arms. Already, Greece being too small a sphere of action for him, he had penetrated even into Persia, passed the famous Phrygian river, where he slew six hundred thousand men, reduced Caria and Judea, made war with Darius and conquered him, performed exploits more than human, and in spite of nature, besieged and took Tyre, the most famous siege recorded in ancient history, subjugated the Mardi and Bactrians, attained the mountains Caucasus and Oxus, and, in a word, conquered more countries, and enslaved more people, than we can describe, or even mention within the limits allotted to this exercise. This man arrives in Scythia. The Scythians sent deputies to him, who thus addressed him. "Had the gods given you a body proportioned to your ambition, the whole universe would have been *too little* for you: with one hand you will *have* touched the east, and with the other the west,

weſt, and, not content with this, you would have followed the ſun, and have ſeen where he hides himſelf. Whatever you are, you are aſpiring at what you can never obtain. From Europe you run into Aſia: and from Aſia back you run again into Europe, and having enſlaved all mankind, you attack rivers, and foreſts, and wild beaſts. What have you to do with us? We have never ſet foot in your country. May not a people, living in a deſert, be allowed to be ignorant of who you are, and whence you come? You boaſt of having exterminated robbers, and you yourſelf are the greateſt robber in the world. You have pillaged and plundered all nations, and now you come to rob us of our cattle. It is in vain to fill your hands, for you are always in ſearch of freſh prey. Of what uſe are your boundleſs riches, except to irritate your eternal thirſt? You are the firſt man, who ever experienced ſuch extreme want in the midſt of ſuch abundance. All you have, ſerves only to make you deſire with more fury what you have not. If you be a God, do good to mankind: but if you be only an inſignificant mortal, think of what you are, and remember, that it is a great folly to occupy things, which make us forget ourſelves."* Theſe are the motives, which animate the heroes of the world; theſe are the ſentiments, which are diſguiſed under the fine names of glory, valor, greatneſs of ſoul, heroiſm. An inſatiable avidity of riches, an invincible pride, a boundleſs ambition, a total forgetfulneſs of what is, what ought to be, and what muſt be hereafter.

The motives of him, who endeavors to render himſelf maſter of his own heart, are love of order, deſire of freedom from the ſlavery of the paſſions, a noble firmneſs of ſoul, which admits only

* Quintus Curtius, lib. vii. chap. 8.

only what appears true, and loves only what appears lovely, after ſober and ſerious diſcuſſion. In this firſt view, then, the advantage is wholly in favor of *him, that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he, that taketh a city.*

2. Compare, in the ſecond place, the *exploits of him that ruleth his ſpirit*, with the exploits of *him, that taketh a city.* He, who is capable of *ruling his ſpirit*, is capable of all that is great and noble in *him, that taketh a city:* but *he, that taketh a city*, is not capable of all that is great and magnanimous in *him, that ruleth his ſpirit.* I will explain myſelf.

What is there great and magnanimous in a hero that taketh a city? Patience to endure fatigue, to ſurmount difficulties, to ſuffer contradiction: intrepidity in the moſt frightful dangers: preſence of mind in the moſt violent and painful exerciſes: unſhaken firmneſs in ſight of a near and terrible diſſolution. Theſe are diſpoſitions of mind, I grant, which ſeem to elevate man above humanity: but a chriſtian hero is capable of all this, I ſpeak ſincerely, and without a figure. A man, who hath obtained a religious freedom of mind, who always preſerves this liberty, who always weighs good and evil, who believes only what is true, and does only what is right; who hath always his eye upon his duty, or, as the pſalmiſt expreſſeth it, who *ſets the Lord always before him*, ſuch a man is capable, literally capable, of all you admire in a worldly hero. No difficulty diſcourages him, no contradiction diſconcerts him, no fatigue ſtops him, no dangers affright him, no pain but he can bear, no appearance of death ſhocks him into paleneſs, and fear, and flight. Our women and children, our confeſſors and martyrs, have literally performed greater exploits of fortitude, patience, courage, and conſtancy, in convents, priſons, and dungeons, at ſtakes, and on ſcaffolds, than Alexanders

anders and Cæſars in all their lives. And where is the hero of this world, who hath performed ſo many actions of courage and magnanimity in ſieges and battles, as our confeſſors have for thirty years on board the gallies? The former were ſupported by the preſence of thouſands of witneſſes: the latter had no ſpectators but God, and their own conſciences. The chriſtian hero is capable then of all that is great in the hero of the world. But the worldly hero is incapable of performing ſuch exploits as the chriſtian hero performs; and he knows perfectly, that his heroiſm doth not conduct him ſo far in the path of glory. Try the ſtrength of a worldly hero. Set him to contend with a paſſion. You will ſoon find this man, invincible before, ſubdued into ſlavery and ſhame. He, who was firm and fearleſs in ſight of fire and flame, at the ſound of warlike inſtruments, becomes feeble, mean, and enervated, by a ſeducing and enchanting object. Sampſon defeats the Philiſtines: but Dalilah ſubdues Sampſon. Sampſon carries away the gates of Gaza: but Sampſon ſinks under the weight of his own ſenſuality. Hercules ſeeks highway robbers to combat, and monſters to ſubdue: but he cannot reſiſt impurity. We find him on monuments of antiquity carrying an infant on his ſhoulders, an emblem of voluptuouſneſs, ſtooping under that unworthy burden, and letting his club fall from his hand. There is, therefore, no declamation, no hyperbole in our propoſition: the chriſtian hero is capable of performing all the great actions performed by the hero of the world: but the hero of the world is incapable of performing ſuch noble actions as the chriſtian hero performs; and in this reſpect, *he, that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he, that taketh a city.*

3. Compare *him, that taketh a city, with him that ruleth his ſpirit,* in regard to the *enemies,* whom they attack, and you will find in the

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latter a third title of ſuperiority over the former. *He, that taketh a city*, attacks an exterior enemy, who is a ſtranger, and often odious to him. The ambition, that fills his ſoul, leaves no room for compaſſion and pity; and, provided he can but obtain his end, no matter to him though the way be ſtrewed with the dying and the dead, to obtain that, he travels over mountains of heads, and arms, and carcaſes. The tumultuous paſſions, which tyrannize over him, ſtifle the voice of nature, and deafen him to the cries of a thouſand miſerable wretches ſacrificed to his fame.

The enemy, whom the chriſtian combats, is his own heart: for he is required to turn his arms againſt himſelf. He muſt ſuſpend all ſentiments of ſelf-love; he muſt become his own executioner, and, to uſe the ideas and expreſſions of Jeſus Chriſt, he muſt actually *deny himſelf*.

Jeſus Chriſt well knew mankind. He did not preach like ſome preaching novices, who, in order to incline their hearers to ſubdue their paſſions, propoſe the work to them as free from difficulty. Jeſus Chriſt did not diſguiſe the difficulties, which the man muſt undergo, who puts on the ſpirit of chriſtianity: and I do not know whether we meet with any expreſſion in the writings of pagan poets or philoſophers, more natural, and at the ſame time more emphatical than this: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf*, Matt. xvi. 24.

Not that this is literally practicable, not that man can put off himſelf, not that religion requires us to ſacrifice to it what makes the eſſence and happineſs of our nature: on the contrary, ſtrictly ſpeaking, it is ſin, which makes us put off or deny what is great and noble in our eſſence; it is ſin, which requires us to ſacrifice our true happineſs to it. If Jeſus Chriſt expreſſes himſelf in this manner, it is becauſe, when

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man is poſſeſſed with a paſſion, it is incorporated, as it were, with himſelf; it ſeems to him eſſential to his felicity; every thing troubles, and every thing puts him on the rack, when he cannot gratify it; without gratifying his paſſion, his food hath no taſte, flowers no ſmell, pleaſures no point, the ſun is dark, ſociety diſagreeable, life itſelf hath no charms. To attack a reigning paſſion is *to deny ſelf*; and *here is the patience of the ſaints*; this is the enemy, whom the chriſtian attacks; this is the war, which he wageth. How tremulous and weak is the hand, when it toucheth a ſword to be plunged into one's own boſom! Love of order, truth, and virtue, ſupport a chriſtian hero in this almoſt deſperate undertaking.

4. In fine, compare *him, that ruleth his ſpirit, with him that taketh a city*, in regard to the *acclamations* with which they are accompanied, and the *crowns* prepared for them. Who are the authors of thoſe acclamations, with which the air reſounds the praiſe of worldly heroes? They are courtiers, poets, panegyriſts. But what! are people of this order the only perſons, who entertain juſt notions of glory; and, if they be, are they generous enough to ſpeak out? How can a ſoul wholly devoted to the will and caprice of a conqueror; how can a venal creature, who makes a market of eulogiums and praiſes, which he ſells to the higheſt bidder; how can a brutal ſoldiery determine what is worthy of praiſe or blame? Is it for ſuch people to diſtribute prizes of glory, and to aſſign heroes their rank? To be exalted by people of this ſort is a ſhame; to be crowned by their hands an infamy.

Elevate, elevate thy meditation, chriſtian ſoul, riſe into the Majeſty of the Great Supreme. Think of that ſublime Intelligence, who unites in his eſſence every thing noble and ſublime. Contemplate God, ſurrounded with angels and archangels,

archangels, cherubims and ſeraphims. Hear the concerts, which happy ſpirits perform to his glory. Hear them penetrated, raviſhed, charmed with the divine beauties, crying night and day, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole earth is full of his glory. Bleſſing and glory, wiſdom, and thankſgiving, honor and power and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of ſaints. Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" This being, ſo perfect, this being, ſo worthily praiſed, this being, ſo worthy of everlaſting praiſe, this is he, who will pronounce upon true glory; this is he, who will compoſe the eulogium of all who aſpire at it; this is he, who will one day praiſe in the face of heaven and earth, all thoſe, who ſhall have made the noble conqueſts, which we have been deſcribing.

Imagination ſinks under the weight of this ſubject, and this object is too bright for eyes like ours: but the nature of things doth not depend on our faculty of ſeeing them. As God calls us to combats more than human, ſo he ſees fit to ſupport us by a proſpect of more than human rewards. Yes, it is the Supreme Being, it is he, who will one day diſtribute the praiſes, which are due to ſuch as have triumphed over themſelves. What a ſpectacle! what a proſpect! Yes, chriſtian champion, after thou haſt reſiſted fleſh and blood, after thou haſt been treated as a fool by mankind, after thou haſt run the race of tribulation, after thou haſt made thy life one perpetual martyrdom, thou ſhalt be called forth in the preſence of men and angels, the maſter of the world ſhall ſeparate thee from the crowd; there he will addreſs to thee this language, *Well done, good and faithful ſervant*; there he will accompliſh the promiſe, which he

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this day makes to all who fight under his ſtandard, *be that overcometh ſhall ſit down in my throne.* Ah! glory of worldly heroes; profane encomiums; faſtidious inſcriptions; proud trophies; brilliant but corruptible diadems; what are you in compariſon with the acclamations which await the chriſtian hero, and the crowns which God, the rewarder, prepares for him.

And you, mean and timid ſouls, who perhaps admire theſe triumphs, but who have not the ambition to ſtrive to obtain them; you ſoft and indolent ſpirits, who, without reluctance, give up all pretenſions to the immortal crown, which God prepares for heroiſm, provided he require no account of your indolence and effeminacy, and ſuffer you, like brute beaſts, to follow the firſt inſtincts of your nature; undeceive yourſelves. I ſaid at the beginning, you are all called to heroiſm; there is no midway in religion; you muſt be covered with ſhame and infamy along with the baſe and timid, or crowned with glory in company with heroes. The duty of an intelligent ſoul is to adhere to truth, and to follow virtue; we bring into the world with us obſtacles to both; our duty is to ſurmount them; without this we betray our truſt; we do not anſwer the end of our creation; we are guilty, and we ſhall be puniſhed for not endeavoring to obtain the great end for which we are created.

Let this be the great principle of our divinity and morality. Let us invariably retain it. Let us not loſe ourſelves in diſcuſſions and reſearches into the origin of evil, and into the permiſſion of the entrance of ſin into the world. Let us not bury ourſelves alive in ſpeculations and labyrinths; let us not plunge into abyſſes, from which no pains can diſengage us. Let us fear an ocean full of rocks, and let an idea of the ſhipwrecks, which ſo many raſh people have made, ſtop us on the ſhore. Let us conſider theſe queſ-

tions leſs with a view to diſcover the perfections of the Creator in the thick darkneſs, under which he hath thought proper to conceal them, than in that of learning the obligations of a creature. I do not mean to decry thoſe great geniuſes, who have treated of this profound ſubject. Their works do honor to the human mind. They are eternal monuments to the glory of a reaſon, which knows how to collect its force, and to fix itſelf on a ſingle object; but, it is always certain, that we cannot arrive at clear truth on this ſubject, except by means of thouſands of diſtinctions and abſtractions, which moſt of us cannot make. This ſubject is ſo delicate and refined, that moſt eyes are incapable of ſeeing it, and it is placed on an eminence ſo ſteep and inacceſſible, that few geniuſes can attain it.

Let us religiouſly abide by our principle. The duty of an intelligent ſoul is to adhere to truth, and to practiſe virtue: We are born with a diſinclination to both. Our duty is to get rid of this, and without doing ſo we neglect the obligation of an intelligent ſoul, we do not anſwer the end, for which we were intended, we are guilty, and we ſhall be puniſhed for not having anſwered the end of our creation.

Let us conſider ourſelves as ſoldiers placed round a beſieged city, and having ſuch or ſuch an enemy to fight, ſuch or ſuch a poſt to force. You, you are naturally ſubject to violence and anger. It is ſad to find in one's own conſtitution an oppoſition to virtues ſo lovely as thoſe of ſubmiſſion, charity, ſweetneſs, and patience. Groan under this evil: but do not deſpair; when you are judged, leſs attention will be paid to your natural indiſpoſition to theſe virtues than to the efforts, which you made to get rid of it. To this point direct all your attention, and your ſtrength, and all your courage. Say to yourſelf, this is the poſt, which my general intends I

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ſhould force; this is the enemy I am to fight with. And be you fully convinced, that one of the principal views, which God hath in preſerving your life, is, that you ſhould render yourſelf maſter of this paſſion. You, you are naturally diſpoſed to be proud. The moment you leave your mind to its natural bias, it turns to ſuch objects as ſeem the moſt fit to give you high ideas of yourſelf, to your penetration, your memory, your imagination, and even to exterior advantages, which vanity generally incorporates with the perſon who enjoys them. It is melancholy to find within yourſelf any ſeeds of an inclination, which ſo ill agree with creatures vile and miſerable as men. Lament this misfortune: but do not deſpair; to this ſide turn all your attention and all your courage and ſtrength. Say to yourſelf, this is the poſt, which my general would have me force; this is the enemy, whom he hath appointed me to oppoſe. And be fully convinced, that one of the principal views of God, in continuing you in this world, is, that you may reſiſt this paſſion, and make yourſelf maſter of it.

Let us, all together, my brethren, endeavor to rule our own ſpirits. Let us not be diſmayed at the greatneſs of the work, becauſe *greater is he that is in us, than be that is in the world.* Grace comes to the aid of nature. Prayer acquires ſtrength by exerciſe. The paſſions, after having been tyrants, become ſlaves in their turn. The danger and pain of battle vaniſh, when the eye gets ſight of conqueſt. How inconceivably beautiful is victory then! God grant we may obtain it! To him be honor and glory for ever, Amen.

SERMON

SERMON XI.

GENERAL MISTAKES.

ROMANS xii. 2.

Be not conformed to this world.

OF all the diſcourſes delivered in this pulpit, thoſe, which deſerve the greateſt deference, and uſually obtain the leaſt, are ſuch as treat of general miſtakes. What ſubjects require greater deference? Our deſign in treating of them is to diſſipate thoſe illuſions, with which the whole world is familiar, which are authorised by the multitude, and which, like epidemical diſeaſes, inflicted ſometimes by providence on public bodies, involve the ſtate, the church, and individuals. Yet, are any diſcourſes leſs reſpected than ſuch as theſe? To attack general miſtakes, is, to excite the diſpleaſure of all who favor them, to diſguſt a whole auditory, and to acquire the moſt odious of all titles, I mean that of public cenſor. A preacher is then obliged to chooſe, either never to attack ſuch miſtakes as the multitude think fit to authorize, or to renounce the advantages, which he may promiſe himſelf, if he adapt his ſubjects to the taſte of his auditors, and touch their diſorders only ſo far as to accommodate their crimes to their conſciences.

Let us not heſitate what part to take. St. Paul determines us by his example. I am going to-day, in imitation of this apoſtle, to guard you againſt the rocks, where the many are ſhipwrecked. He exhorts us, in the words of the text, not to take *the world* for a model; *the world*, that is, the crowd, the multitude, ſociety at large. But what ſociety hath he in view? Is it that of ancient Rome, which he deſcribes as extreme-

ly depraved in the beginning of this epiſtle? Does he ſay nothing of our world, our cities and provinces? We are going to examine this, and I fear I ſhall be able to prove to you, that our multitude is a dangerous guide to ſhew us the way to heaven; and, to confine ourſelves to a few articles, I ſhall prove that they are bad guides to direct us, firſt, in regard to faith; ſecondly, in regard to the worſhip which God requires of us; thirdly, in regard to morality; and laſtly, in regard to the hour of death. In theſe four views I ſhall enforce the words of my text, *Be not conformed to this world.* This is the whole plan of this diſcourſe.

I. The multitude is a bad guide to direct our *faith.* We will not introduce here the famous controverſy on this queſtion, whether a great number form a preſumption in favor of any religion, or whether univerſality be a certain evidence of the true chriſtian church? How often has this queſtion been debated and determined! How often have we proved againſt one community, which diſplays the number of its profeſſors with ſo much parade, that, if the pretence were well founded, it would operate in favor of paganiſm, for pagans were always more numerous than chriſtians! How often have we told them, that in divers periods of the ancient church, idolatry and idolaters have been enthroned in both the kingdoms of Judah and Iſrael! How often have we alledged, that in the time of Jeſus Chriſt, the church was deſcribed as a *little flock*, Luke xii. 32. that heathens and Jews were all in league againſt chriſtianity at firſt, and that the goſpel had only a ſmall number of diſciples! How often have we retorted, that for whole centuries, there was no trace, no ſhadow, of the opinions of modern Rome! But we will not apply ourſelves to this controverſy to-day, by fixing your attention on the ſophiſms of foreigners,

perhaps we might divert your eyes from your own; by ſhewing you our triumphs over the vain attacks made on us by the enemies of the reformation, perhaps we might turn away your attention from other more dangerous wounds, which the reformed themſelves aim at the heart of religion. When I ſay the multitude is a bad guide in matters of faith, I mean, that the manner in which moſt men adhere to truth, is not by principles, which ought to attach them to it, but by a ſpirit of negligence and prejudice.

It is no ſmall work to examine the truth, when we arrive at an age capable of diſcuſſion. The fundamental points of religion, I grant, lie in the ſcriptures clear and perſpicuous, and within the comprehenſion of all who chuſe to attend to them: but when we paſs from infancy to manhood, and arrive at an age in which reaſon ſeems mature, we find ourſelves covered with a veil, which either hides objects from us, or diſfigures them. The public diſcourſes we have heard in favor of the ſect, in which we were educated, the inveterate hatred we have for all others, who hold principles oppoſite to ours, the frightful portraits that are drawn before our eyes, of the perils we muſt encounter, if we depart from the way we have been brought up in, the impreſſions made upon us by the examples and deciſions of our parents, and maſters, and teachers, the bad taſte of thoſe, who had the care of our education, and who prevented our acquiring that moſt noble diſpoſition, without which it is impoſſible ever to be a true philoſopher, or a real chriſtian, I mean, that of ſuſpending our judgment on ſubjects not ſufficiently proved: from all this ariſe clouds, that render the truth inacceſſible, and which the world cannot diſſipate. We do not ſay, that natural talents or ſupernatural aſſiſtance are wanting; we are fully convinced that God will never give up to final error,

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any man who does all in his power to underſtand the truth. But the world are incapable of this work. Why? Becauſe all the world, except a few, hate labor and meditation in regard to the ſubjects, which reſpect another life: becauſe all the world would chooſe rather to attach themſelves to what regards their temporal intereſts, than to the great intereſt of eternal happineſs: becauſe all the world like better to ſuppoſe the principles imbibed in their childhood true, than to impoſe on themſelves the taſk of weighing them anew in the balance of a ſound and ſevere reaſon: becauſe all the world have an invincible averſion to ſuppoſe, that when they are arrived at manhood, they have almoſt loſt their time in ſome reſpects, and that when they leave ſchool they begin to be capable of inſtruction.

If the nature of the thing cannot convince you, that the multitude continue through negligence in the profeſſion of that religion, in which they were born, experience may here ſupply the place of reaſoning. There is an infinite variety of geniuſes among mankind. Propoſe to an aſſembly a queſtion, that no ſyſtem hath yet decided, and you will find, as it is uſually ſaid, as many opinions as heads.

It is certain, if mankind were attached to a religion only becauſe they had ſtudied it, we ſhould find a great number of people forſake that, in which they had been brought up, for it is impoſſible, that a whole ſociety ſhould unite in one point of error, or rather, it is clear to a demonſtration, that as truth hath certain characters ſuperior to falſehood, the temples of idols would be inſtantly deſerted, erroneous ſects would be ſoon abandoned, the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, the only one worthy of being embraced, the only one that deſerves diſciples, would be the only one embraced, and would alone be received by all ſincere diſciples of truth.

Do not think, my brethren, that this reflection concerning that ſpirit of negligence, which retains moſt men in a profeſſion of their own religion, regards only ſuch communions as lay down their own infallibility for a fundamental article of faith, and which preſcribe ignorance and blind ſubmiſſion as a firſt principle to their partizans, for it is but too eaſy to prove, that the ſame ſpirit of negligence reigns in all communities. Hence it comes to paſs, that in general ſo few chriſtians can render a reaſon for their faith. Hence it is that people are uſually better furniſhed with arguments to oppoſe ſuch ſocieties as ſurround them, than with thoſe, which eſtabliſh the fundamental truths of chriſtianity. If then you follow the direction of the multitude in the ſtudy of religion, you will be conducted by a ſpirit of negligence, prejudice will be held for proof, education for argument, and the deciſions of your parents and teachers for infallible oracles of truth.

II. The multitude is a bad guide in regard to that *worſhip*, which God requireth of us, they defile it with a ſpirit of ſuperſtition. Superſtition is a diſpoſition of mind, that inclines us to regulate all parts of divine worſhip, not by juſt notions of the Supreme Being, nor by his relations to us, nor by what he has condeſcended to reveal, but by our own fancies. A ſuperſtitious man entertains fantaſtical ideas of God, and renders to him capricious worſhip; he not unfrequently takes himſelf for a model of God; he thinks, that what moſt reſembles himſelf, however mean and contemptible, approaches neareſt to perfection. We affirm, this diſpoſition is almoſt univerſal.

It would be needleſs to prove this to you, my brethren, in regard to erroneous communities. Were ſuperſtition baniſhed from the world, we ſhould not ſee men, who are made in the image

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of God, disgrace their nature by prostrating themselves before idols, and marmosets, so as to render religious honors to half a block of wood or stone, the other half of which they apply to the meanest purposes: we should not see a crowd of idolaters performing a ceremonial, in which conviction of mind hath no part, and which is all external and material: we should not see a concourse of people receiving with respect, as the precious blood of the Saviour of the world, a few drops of putrified water, which the warmth of the sun hath produced by fermentation in the trunk of a decayed tree: we should not see pilgrims in procession mangling their flesh in the streets, dragging along heavy loads, howling in the highways, and taking such absurd practices for that repentance, which breaks the heart, and transforms and renews the life. You will easily grant all this, for, I have observed, it is often less difficult to inspire you with horror for these practices, than to excite compassion in you for such as perform them.

But you ought to be informed, that there are other superstitions less gross, and therefore more dangerous. Among us we do not put a worship absolutely foreign to the purpose in the place of that, which God hath commanded and exemplified to us; but we make an estimate of the several parts of true worship. These estimates are regulated by opinions formed through prejudice or passion. What best agrees with our inclinations we consider as the essence of religion, and what would thwart and condemn them we think circumstantial.

We make a scruple of not attending a sermon, not keeping a festival, not receiving the Lord's supper; but we make none of neglecting to visit a prisoner, to comfort the sick, or to plead for the oppressed. We observe a strict decency in our religious assemblies, while our ministers address

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prayer to God, but we take no pains to accompany him with our minds and hearts, to unite our ejaculations with his, to beſiege the throne of grace. We think it a duty to join our voices with thoſe of a whole congregation, and to fill our places of worſhip with the praiſes of our Creator; but we do not think ourſelves obliged to underſtand the ſenſe of the pſalm, that is ſung with ſo much fervor, and, in the language of an apoſtle, to *ſing with underſtanding*, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. We lay aſide innocent occupations the day before we receive the Lord's ſupper, but no ſooner do we return from that ordinance, than we allow the moſt criminal pleaſures, and enter upon the moſt ſcandalous intrigues. Who make theſe miſtakes, my brethren? Is it the few? *Be not conformed to this world*, in regard to the worſhip that God requires of you; the multitude perform it in a ſpirit of ſuperſtition.

III. Neither are the many a better guide in regard to *morality*. Here, my brethren, we are going more particularly to deſcribe that claſs of mankind, among which we live, and of which we ourſelves are a part. Indeed, the portraits we are going to draw will not be flattering to them, for juſtice requires, that we ſhould deſcribe men as they are, not as they pretend to be. In order to exactneſs, let us conſider them ſeparately and apart. Firſt, in regard to the maſters who govern them. Secondly, in regard to the profeſſions, which they exerciſe. Thirdly, in regard to ſome maxims generally received. Fourthly, in regard to the ſplendid actions, which they celebrate. And laſtly, in regard to certain deciſive occaſions, that like touchſtones, diſcover their principles and motives.

1. Conſider mankind in regard to the *maſters* who govern them. Here I congratulate myſelf on the happineſs of ſpeaking to a free people, among whom it is not reputed a crime to praiſe

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what is praiſe-worthy, and to blame what deſerves blame, and where we may freely trace the characters of ſome men, of whom prudence requires us not to "ſpeak evil, no not in thought, no not in the bed chamber, leſt a bird of the air ſhould carry the voice, and that which hath wings ſhould tell the matter," Eccles. x. 20. Is it in the palaces of the great that humility reigns, humility which ſo well becomes creatures, who, though crowned and enthroned, are yet infirm, criminal, dying creatures, and who, in a few days, will become food for worms, yea, perhaps victims in the flames of hell? Is it in the palaces of the great that uprightneſs, good faith, and ſincerity reign, yet without theſe ſociety is nothing but a banditti, treaties are only ſnares, and laws cobwebs, which, to uſe a well known expreſſion, catch only weak inſects, while the free and carnivorous break through? Is it in the palaces of the great that gratitude reigns, that lawful tribute due to every motion made to procure our happineſs? Is it there that the ſervices of a faithful ſubject, the labors of an indefatigable merchant, the perils of an intrepid ſoldiery, blood ſhed and to be ſhed, are eſtimated and rewarded? Is it there that the cries of the wretched are heard, tears of the oppreſſed wiped away, the claims of truth examined and granted? Is it in the palaces of the great that benevolence reigns, that benevolence without which a man is only a wild beaſt? Is it there that the *young ravens which cry* are heard and fed? Pſal. cxlvii. 9. Is it there that they attend to the bitter complaints of an indigent man, ready to die with hunger, and who aſks for no more than will juſt keep him alive? Are the palaces of the great, ſeats of piety and devotion? Is it there that ſchemes are formed for the reformation of manners? Is it there that they are *grieved for the affliction of Joſeph*, Amos vi. 6. and *take pleaſ-*

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ure in the dust and stones of Zion? Pſal. cii. 14. Is it there that we hear the praiſes of the Creator, do they celebrate the compaſſion of the Redeemer of mankind?

What ideas are excited in our minds by the names of ſuch as Caligula, Nero, Dioclesian, Decius, names deteſtable in all ages? What ideas could we excite in your minds, were we to weigh in a juſt balance the virtues of ſuch heroes as have been rendered famous by the encomiums given them? You would be aſtoniſhed to ſee that theſe men, who have been called the *delights of mankind*, have often deſerved execration, and ought to be conſidered with horror. But I purpoſely forbear, and will not put in this liſt all that ought to be placed there, that is to ſay, all thoſe who have had ſovereign power, except a very few, who, in compariſon, are next to none, and who are, as it were, loſt in the crowd among the reſt. And yet the elevation of kings makes their crimes more communicable, and their examples more contagious; their ſins become a filthy vapor infecting the air, and ſhedding their malignant influence all over our cities and families, lightning, and thundering, and diſturbing the world. Accordingly, you ſee in general, that what the king is in his kingdom, the governor is in his province; what the governor is in his province, the nobleman is in his domain; what the nobleman is in his domain, the maſter is in his family. The multitude is a bad guide, mankind are a dangerous model, conſidered in regard to the maſters who govern them.

2. Conſider the many in regard to divers *profeſſions*. What is the profeſſion of a ſoldier, particularly of an officer of rank in the army? It is to defend ſociety, to maintain religion, to be a parent to the ſoldiery, to bridle the licentiouſneſs of arms, to oppoſe power againſt injuſtice, to derive from all the views of death that lie

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open before him, motives to prepare his accounts to produce before his judge. But what is the conduct of a ſoldier? Is it not to brave ſociety? Is it not to trample upon religion? Is it not to ſet examples of debauchery, licentiouſneſs, and vengeance? Is it not to let out his abilities, and to ſacrifice his life to the moſt ambitious deſigns, and to the moſt bloody enterprizes of princes? Is it not to accuſtom himſelf to ideas of death and judgment, till he laughs at both, to ſtifle all remorſe, and to extirpate all the fears, which ſuch objects naturally excite in the conſciences of other men?

What is the profeſſion of a judge? It is to have no regard to the appearances of men; it is to be affable to all, who appeal to authority, to ſtudy with application the nature of a cauſe, which he is obliged to decide, it is patiently to go through the moſt fatiguing details of proofs and objections. But what is often the conduct of a judge? Is it not to be ſtruck with the exterior difference of two parties appearing before him? Is it not to be inacceſſible to the poor, to invent cruel reſerves, and intolerable delays? Is it not to grovel in ignorance, and to hate ſtudy and labor?

What is the profeſſion of a man learned in the law? It is to devote his ſervice only to truth and juſtice, to plead only a good cauſe, to aſſiſt even thoſe, who cannot reward his labors. What is the conduct of counſel? Is it not to ſupport both the true and the falſe, and to maintain by turns both juſtice and iniquity? Is it not to adjuſt his efforts to his own glory, or to his client's ability to pay?

What is the profeſſion of a merchant? It is to deteſt falſe weights and meaſures, to pay his dues, and never to found his fortune on falſehood, fraud, and perjury. But what is the conduct of a merchant? Is it not to uſe falſe

weights and measures? Is it not to cheat the ſtate of its dues? Is it not to indulge an inſatiable avidity? Is it not to enrich himſelf by telling untruths, by practiſing frauds, by taking falſe oaths?

What is the profeſſion of a miniſter? It is to devote himſelf wholly to truth and virtue, to ſet the whole church an example, to ſearch into hoſpitals, and cottages, to relieve the miſeries of the ſick and the poor; it is to determine himſelf in his ſtudies, not by what will acquire him reputation for learning and eloquence, but by what will be moſt uſeful to the people, over whom he is ſet; it is to regulate his choice of ſubjects, not by what will make himſelf ſhine, but by what will moſt benefit the people among whom he exerciſes his miniſtry; it is to take as much care of a dying perſon in an obſcure family, lying on a bed of ſtraw, loſt in oblivion and ſilence, as of him, who, with an illuſtrious name, lives amidſt ſilver and gold, and for whom the moſt magnificent and pompous funeral honors will be prepared; it is to *cry aloud, to lift up his voice like a trumpet, and ſhew the people their tranſgreſſions, and the houſe of Iſrael their ſins*, Iſa. lviii. 1. Mic. iii. 8. and 2 Cor. v. 16. *it is to know no man after the fleſh* when he aſcends the pulpit, boldly to reprove vice, how eminent ſoever the ſeat of it may be. What is the uſual conduct of a miniſter?—O God! *Enter not into judgment with thy ſervants, for we cannot anſwer one* complaint *of a thouſand!* Pſal. cxliii. 2. Job ix. 3.

3. Conſider the multitude in regard to ſome general *maxims*, which they adopt, and hold as rules and approved axioms. Have you read, in the goſpel, the following maxims? Charity begins at home. Youth is a time of pleaſure. It is allowable to kill time. We ſhould not pretend to be ſaints. Slander is the ſalt of converſation.

ſtion. We muſt do as other people do. It is unworthy of a man of honor to put up an affront. A gentleman ought to avenge himſelf. Ambition is the vice of great ſouls. Provided we commit no great crimes, we ſufficiently anſwer our calling. Impurity is an intolerable vice in a woman, but it is pardonable in a man. It would be eaſy to enlarge this catalogue. Which of theſe maxims, pray, doth not ſap ſome of the firſt principles of the religion of Jeſus Chriſt? Yet, which of theſe maxims is not received in ſociety as a fundamental rule of action, which we ſhould be accounted ſingular and petulant to condemn?

4. Conſider the multitude in regard to certain *actions, on which they laviſh praiſe and write encomiums.* We do not mean to ſpeak at preſent of ſuch crimes as the depravity of the world ſometimes celebrates under the notion of heroical actions. Our reflection is of another kind. It is pretty clear, that depravity is general, and piety in the poſſeſſion of a very few, when perſons of ſuperficial knowledge are praiſed for the depth of their underſtanding, and when ſuch as perform very ſmall and inconſiderable actions of virtue, are conſidered as the wonders of the world. Sometimes I hear the world exclaim, what benevolence! What liberality! What generoſity! I inquire for the evidences of theſe virtues, on which ſuch laviſh encomiums are beſtowed; I expect to find another St. Paul, who *wiſhed himſelf accurſed for his brethren*, Rom. ix. 3. I hope to meet with another Moſes, praying to be *blotted out of the book* of life, rather than ſee his nation periſh, Exod. xxxii. 32. But no, this boaſted generoſity and charity is that of a man, who diſtributed to the poor, on one ſolemn occaſion, once in his life, ſuch a ſum of money as he expends every day in prodigality and ſuperfluity. It is that of a man, who beſtows on all the members

bers of Jesus Christ, almost as much as he does on the walls of a room, or the harness of a horse. I hear the world exclaim in some circumstances, what friendship! What tenderness! I inquire for this tender, zealous, generous friend. I expect to find such an original as I have seen described in books, though I have never met with such an one in society. I hope at least to see one example of a friend, saying to a dying man, appoint me your executor, and leave me your children to bring up, and your widow to provide for. But no, I find nothing but the friendship of a man, who, by improving the fortune of another, attracts the chief advantages to himself. I hear the world exclaiming in certain circumstances, what virtue! What purity! What a mother of a family! Again I look for the object of these encomiums. I hope to see such a woman as Solomon imagined, a mother of a family, who makes her house a house of God, and her children patterns of piety. But no, I meet with a woman, who indeed does not defile the nuptial bed, who only doth not outlive her income, and who teaches her children only the little course of domestic economy. All these actions are praise-worthy. All these examples ought to be imitated. But is there any ground for exclaiming as if virtue had been carried to its highest pitch? Are these then such great efforts of religion? Alas! My brethren, complete characters must needs be very scarce in the world, since the world is in raptures on account of these imperfect virtues; there must needs be a great dearth of wise men in the world, since there is so much boasting of one man, who takes only one step in the path of wisdom.

5. Consider mankind in regard to certain *decisive occasions*, which, like touchstones, discover their hearts. We do not know ourselves, we form false ideas of ourselves, when our virtues

have

have not been brought to the teſt. We imagine, we incline to be patient, clement and charitable, in caſes where we are not tried, where neither our fortune, nor our reputation, nor our honor, are affected: but the moment a ſtroke is aimed at any of theſe, the countenance changes, the brain ferments, the mouth foams, and we breathe nothing but hatred and vengeance. Nothing is more common among us than to talk highly of juſtice, to deteſt and cenſure iniquity, and to engage ourſelves inviolably to follow ſuch rules of equity as are marked out in the divine law. Let any man bring an action againſt us, with reaſon or without, and all theſe ideas vaniſh, we inſtantly become familiar with the very vices, to which we thought we had an invincible averſion. We diſguiſe our cauſe, we ſuppreſs unfavorable circumſtances, we impoſe on our counſel, we try to take even the judges by ſurpriſe, we pretend to make great matters of the importance of our rank, the worth of our names, the credit of our families, the tone of our voices, and all this we wiſh to incorporate in our cauſe. A diſintereſted ſpirit is always the ſubject of our utmoſt admiration and praiſe. A generous man is the admiration of all mankind, his noble actions unite all hearts, and every man is eager to give ſuch actions their dignity and praiſe: but no ſooner have we a little buſineſs to do, in which we have no kind of intereſt, but diſintereſtedneſs appears odious to us, and magnanimity ſeems to us more proper for a hero of a romance than for a man living and acting in ſociety, and generous actions appear to us mere creatures of imagination. O how little does the multitude deſerve conſideration in regard to manners!

IV. No more ought they to be imitated in regard to the manner, in which they *quit the world*. Here I foreſee, my brethren, you will all ſide with one another againſt our doctrine, and that

we ſhall be obliged to blame both perſons and things about dying people; ſuch as are dying, ſuch as ſurround them, ſuch as viſit them; in ſhort, all are in diſorder in the caſe before us. Almoſt every perſon that dies is canonized. If the light of chriſtianity had not aboliſhed deification, we ſhould have filled heaven with ſaints and heroes and deified ſouls. Each houſe of mourning echoes with the praiſes of the dead, none of his looks towards heaven are forgotten, not a ſigh, not an ejaculation hath eſcaped notice. The funeral convoys of perſons the moſt worldly, whoſe hearts had been the moſt hardened in ſin, are all uttering orations in praiſe of the dead. For our parts, my brethren, we, who have ſeen a great number of ſick people, and attended many in their dying hours, we freely grant, that the ſalvation of many of them is probable. We have hardly ſeen one, whoſe ſalvation we quite deſpair. But how ſeldom have we been inclined to ſay, while we ſaw ſuch people expire uttering the language of the moſt eminent ſaints in ſcripture, *Let us die the death of* theſe *righteous* people, *and let our laſt end be like* theirs! Numb. xxiii. 10.—— I will give you a ſhort liſt of general miſtakes on this ſubject.

The firſt miſtake is this. Moſt ſick people are ingenious to diſguiſe the danger of their illneſs. *Be not conformed to this world.* Whenever a dangerous illneſs attacks you, be aware of your condition, and let each ſay to himſelf, I have not long to live, at leaſt this may be my laſt illneſs. My brethren, this ſuppoſition is never unſeaſonable, we are in little danger of being deceived by thinking death at hand, for the numberleſs accidents, to which we are expoſed, juſtify the thought —Is there any thing extravagant, pray, in affirming that ſickneſs added to all theſe accidents renders the near approach of death highly probable?

The

The second mistake is this. Most dying people put off the regulation of their temporal affairs too long. *Be not conformed to this world.* You should take patterns from better models, both for reasons of affection, and reasons of prudence. True affection to a family engages a man to preclude in favor of his heirs such troubles and divisions as are the inseparable consequences of an undivided or perplexed estate. Prudence, too, will foresee, that while our minds are all occupied about temporal affairs, a thousand ideas will intrude to disturb our devotion. Do not wait till the last moment to settle your affairs, to make your will, to dispose of your family, and be not so weak as to imagine that the discharge of these necessary duties will hasten your death. Employ yourselves wholly about the state of your souls, and let each say to himself, since I have been in the world I have hardly devoted one whole day to devotion: since I have been a member of the church, I have been exercised about affairs which interest the whole society: but now that I am come to the end of my life, now I am passing out of this world, now that I am going where I shall have no more *portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun*, disturb me no more, ye worldly ideas; thou *fashion of this world passing away*, appear no more in my sight: ye wild *fowls*, interrupt my sacrifice no more.

The third mistake is this. Most dying people delay sending for their ministers till the last moment. They would have us do violence to the laws of nature, they set us to exhort trunks, to instruct carcases, to prepare skin and bones for eternity. *Be not conformed to this world.* Why should ye delay? Is there any thing odious in our ministry? We do not bring death along with us, we do not hasten its approach: if we denounce the judgments of God against you, it is not with a design to terrify you, but to free

you

you from them, and to *pull you out of the fire*, Jude 23.

To these I add a fourth mistake. Most dying people think it a duty to tell their pastors of excellent sentiments, which indeed they have not, and they are afraid to discover their defects. When death makes his formidable appearance before them, they think religion requires them to say, they are quite willing to die. *We desire*, say they, *to depart*, when, alas! all their desires are to *make a tabernacle* in the world, for *it is good*; they think, *to be there*. They tremble at the coming of Christ, and yet they cry, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly*. Ah! *Be not conformed to this world*, open thy heart that it may be known, discover the malacies of thy soul, that we may apply such remedies as are proper. Do not imagine you will acquire such sentiments and emotions as saints of the first order had, by talking their language: but imbibe their principles in your mind, and their tempers in your heart, before you make use of their language.

The fifth mistake is this. Most dying people speak to their ministers only in the presence of a great number of attendants, and most attendants interfere in what ministers say on those occasions. *Be not conformed to this world*. Two reasons may convince you of the necessity of being alone. The first regards the pastor. Surrounding attendants divert his attention from the sick person. The second regards the sick person himself. Would it be just or kind to give him directions in public? What! would you have us, in the presence of a husband, lay open the intrigues of an immodest wife, and endeavor to bring her to repent of her lasciviousness by convicting her of her crimes? Would you have us reprove the head of a family for the iniquity that has disgraced his long life, in the presence of his son? Would you have us exhort a dying man

to

to make reſtitution of his ill-gotten wealth, in the preſence of an hungry heir, who already gluts his eyes, and ſatiates his ſoul with hopes of ſucceſſion? Were we caſuiſts after the Romiſh faſhion, did we compel conſciences to reveal ſecrets to us, which ought to be confeſſed to God alone, did we interfere with your families and properties, there would be ſome ground for your ſcruples: but while we deſire nothing but to exonerate your conſciences, and to awaken your ſouls to a ſenſe of danger, before you be plunged into an abyſs of eternal miſery, reſpect our conduct, and condeſcend to ſubmit to our inſtruction.

To theſe I add one miſtake more. Moſt dying people truſt too much to their miniſters, and take too little paint themſelves to form ſuch diſpoſitions as a dying bed requires. *Be not conformed to this world.* It is not enough to have external help to die well, we ourſelves muſt concur in this great work; we muſt, by profound meditation, by frequent reflections, and by fervent prayers, ſupport ourſelves under this laſt attack, and thus put the laſt hand to the work of our ſalvation. It is true, the infirmities of your bodies will affect your minds, and will often interrupt your religious exerciſes; but no matter, God doth not require of a dying perſon connected meditations, accurate reflections, preciſe and formal prayers, for one ſigh, one tear, one ejaculation of your ſoul to God, one ſerious wiſh riſing from the bottom of your heart will be highly eſteemed by the Lord, and will draw down new favors upon you.

To conclude. The multitude is a bad guide in regard to faith, in regard to manners, and in regard to departing out of this life. A man who deſires to be ſaved, ſhould be always upon his guard, leſt he ſhould be rolled down the torrent: he ought to compile in his cloſet, or rather in his conſcience, a religion apart, ſuch as is, not that

of

of the children of the world, but that of the disciples of wisdom. *Be not conformed to this world.*

I finish with two reflections. I address the first to those, who derive from this discourse no consequences to direct their actions: and the second to such as refer it to its true design.

First. I address myself to you who do not draw any consequences from this discourse to regulate your actions. You have seen a portrait of the multitude. I suppose you acknowledge the likeness, and acquiesce in the judgment we have made. It seems, too many proofs and demonstrations establish this proposition, the multitude is a bad guide. Now you may follow which example you please. You may make your choice between the maxims of Jesus Christ and the maxims of the world. But we have a right to require one thing of you, which you cannot refuse us without injustice, that is, that granting the genius of the multitude, when you are told you are destroying yourselves, you do not pretend to have refuted us by replying, we conduct ourselves as the world does, and every body does what you condemn in us. Thanks be to God, your proposition is not strictly true! Thanks be to God, the rule hath some exceptions! There are many regenerate souls, hidden perhaps from the eyes of men, but visible to God. There are even some saints, who shine in the sight of the whole world, and who, to use the expression of Jesus Christ, are a *city set on a hill*, Matt. v. 14. What then, you never cast your eyes on the most illustrious objects in this world! Do you reckon for nothing what alone merits observation in society, and what constitutes the true glory of it? Have you no value for men, for whose sake the world subsists, and society is preserved?

However, your proposition is indisputable in a general

general ſenſe, and we are obliged to allow it, for our whole diſcourſe tends to elucidate and eſtabliſh the point. Alledge this propoſition, but do not alledge it for the purpoſe of oppoſing the cenſures you have heard, or of getting rid of our reproofs. By anſwering in this manner, you give us an advantage over you, you lay a foundation which you mean to deſtroy, you do not furniſh yourſelves with a ſhield againſt your miniſters, but you yourſelves ſupply them with arms to wound and deſtroy you. Why do we declaim againſt your conduct? What do we mean when we reprove your way of living, except to convince you that it is not anſwerable to the chriſtian character which you bear? What do we mean, except that you break the vows made for you in your baptiſm, and which you yourſelves have often ratified at the Lord's table? What, in one word, except that you do not obey the laws of the goſpel? But what can you advance more proper to ſtrengthen the teſtimony, which we bear againſt you, than that which you advance to weaken it, that is, that you live as the world lives.

All the world, ſay you, conduct themſelves as we do, and every body does what you cenſure us for doing. But all the world conduct themſelves badly, all the world violate the ſpirit of religion, all the world attack the maxims of Jeſus Chriſt, all the world run in the broad road of perdition, all the world are deſtroying themſelves, and the apoſtle exhorts us not to take the *world* for an example.

Secondly. I addreſs myſelf to you, who ſincerely deſire to apply this diſcourſe to its true deſign. I grant, the road opened to you is difficult. To reſiſt the torrent, to brave the multitude, to ſee one's ſelf like Elijah *alone* on the Lord's ſide, and, in this general apoſtacy, in which a chriſtian ſo often finds himſelf, when he

deſires

desires to sacrifice all to his duty, to recollect motives of attachment to it, this is one of the noblest efforts of christian heroism.

However, after all, it would argue great puerility to magnify our ideas of the crowd, the many, the multitude; it would be childish to be too much struck with these ideas, every body thinks, in this manner, all the world acts thus. I affirm, that truth and virtue have more partizans than error and vice, and God hath more disciples than Satan. What do you call the crowd, the many, the multitude? What do you mean by all the world? What! You and your companions, your family, your acquaintances, your fellow citizens, the inhabitants of this globe, to which the Creator hath confined you; is this what you call all the world? What littleness of ideas! Cast your eyes on that little mole hill, occupied by a few thousands of ants, lend them intelligence, propose to one of these insects other maxims than those of his fellows, exhort him to have a little more ambition, than to occupy a tiny imperceptible space upon that mole hill; animate him to form projects more noble than that of collecting a few grains of corn, and then put into the mouth of this little emmet the same pretext that you make use of to us; I shall be alone, all the world conduct themselves in another manner. Would you not pity this insect? Would not he appear more contemptible to you for his mean and spiritless ideas, than for the diminutiveness of his body? Would you not look with disdain on an ant, that had no other ambition than that of taking for a model other insects about him, and preferring their approbation before that of mankind, who hold a rank so high in the scale of the world? My brethren, give what colors you will to this imagination, it is however certain, that you would form unjust ideas of this insect. An emmet hath no relation to

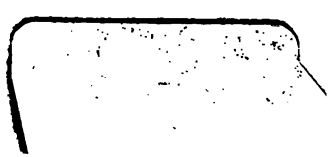
those

thoſe beings, which you propoſe to him for models. Such ideas of happineſs as you trace to him have no proportion to his faculties. Is an emmet capable of ſcience, to be allured by the company of the learned? Can an ant form plans of ſieges and battles, to render himſelf ſenſible of that glory, which exploits of war acquire, and for which the heroes of the world ſacrifice their repoſe and their lives?

It is you, who have that meanneſs of ſoul, which you juſt now pitied in an ant. You inhabit cities and provinces, which, compared with the reſt of the world, reſemble the ſize of mole hills; the whole globe itſelf is nothing in compariſon of the immenſe ſpaces, in which other works of the Creator are lodged. You creep on earth with a handful of men much leſs in compariſon with the thouſand thouſands of other intelligences than an ant hill is in compariſon of mankind. You have intimate relations to theſe intelligences; you, like them, are capable of great and noble functions; like them, you are capable of knowledge; like them, you are able to know the Supreme Being; you can love like them; you can form tender and delicate connections as they can; and like them, you are deſtined to eternal duration and felicity.

Do not ſay then, I ſhall be alone, nobody lives as you would have me live. They are the men, who ſurround you, that are *nobody* in compariſon of the intelligences, whom I propoſe to you for examples. It ill ſuits inſignificant men to conſider themſelves alone as in the centre of divine benevolence, and as the only ſubjects of a monarch, who reigneth over all exiſtence. *He ſitteth upon the circle of the earth*, whence the *inhabitants* appear to him *as grasshoppers. He bringeth princes to nothing, he considereth the judges of the earth as vanity. He ſhall blow upon them and they ſhall wither, and the whirl-*

wind shall take them away like stubble, Isa. xl. 22.

But ye, celestial intelligences, seraphims burning with love, angels mighty in strength, messengers of the divine will, spirits rapid as the wind, and penetrating as fire, ye *redeemed of all nations, all kindred, all people, all tongues*, Rev. v. 9. ye make the crowd, ye fill the court of the sovereign of the world; and, when we refuse to conform ourselves to this world, we imitate you; and when the slaves of the world shall be loaded with chains of darkness, we shall share with you the *river of pleasures*, at the right hand of that God, whom you serve, and to whose service we, like you, devote ourselves. God grant us this grace! To him be honor and glory for ever. Amen.

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